

The prayse of Follie.

MORIAE ENCOMIVM,
a booke made in Latine by
that great clerke *Eraf-*
mus Roterodame.

Englified by Sir Tho-
mas Chaloner
Knight.



Imprinted at London nigh
vnto the three Cranes in the
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and Thomas Gardiner,

1577.

THE PRINCE

OF THE

MORIAN PRINCIPLES

OF THE

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To the Reader.



Follie it maye be
thought in mee,
too haue spent
tyme in Engli-
shing this booke,
entituled, *The*
Prayse of Follie,
wheras the name
it selfe seemeth to set foorth no wildome,
or matter of grauitie: vnlesse perhaps *E-*
rasmus, the Authour thereof, delighted to
mocke men, in calling it one thyng, and
meanynge another. To this I answere,
that Follie in all poyntes is not (as I take
it) so straunge vnto vs, but that her name
may wel be abydden, as long as wyll wee
or nyl we, she wil be sure to beare a stroke
in most of our doinges: howe soeuer a
certaine secte of fault fynders condemne
al things, that fully square not with their
owne Rules, yea twise blynde in this, that
among the common errors and infirmi-
ties of mortal men, they wyl beare no-
thing with their brethren: as who saith,
they were Demigods, and not more then
one or two wayes linked in follies bands.

I haue therefore bestowed an Englishe

A.ii.

Liucio

To the Reader.

Liuerie vpon this Latine booke, as wel as I coulde: not so much to please al men, as rather to shew how euen this Follie toucheth al men. Wherein I woulde not be noted as a carper of any man particular-lye, (for what more vnsittyng than in books or playes, to touch men by name) nor that herein I seeke to haue any kynde of men noted for their trade of lyfe, o-therwise then the abuse therof deserueth: but onely my meanyng is such, as *Eras- mus* in this booke shall expresse for vs both. He of his modestie is content to set no great face vppon it, nor woulde be noted to haue spent great labour in making therof: sauing as in pastime to haue assayed, whether ought might be spoken in prayse of Follie, wheras wisedome the vertue can prayse it selfe. And therefore he imagineth, that Follie should be a God- desse, who before al kindes of men assem- bled as to a Sermon, should declare howe many benefits they receiue at her hands: and how without her accesse, nothyng in this life is delectable, commodious, or tollerable vnto vs, no not our owne lyfe.

This braue boast might wel come from

Follie

To the Reader;

Folliet & seeing that wyser men are wont to take in worth what is saide by a foole, therefore is *Erasmus* also the bolder to put that tale in Folies mouth, which vnder an other person he woulde haue made more curtesie to haue spokē. So what excuse he maketh, the same I require may serue for me: that things spokē foolishly, by Follie, may be euē so taken, & not wrested to any bitter sense or earnest applicatiō. For surely if the crabbedst men that be, are wont to take a fooles wordes as in sport, for feare least others might reckē they would not winche without a galled backe: Then how much more is a dumb booke writtē generally, to be borne withall? [namely where the title pretendeth no grauitie, but rather a toy to stir laughter, without offence in the booke, if the reader bringe none offence with him. For then truly he may chaunce to see his owne image more liuely described then in any painted table. But if that waies he mislike the deformitie of his counterfait, let hym muche more mislike to be suche one in deed. And seeinge the vices of our dayes are suche as can not yenough be spoken

A.iii.

against,

To the Reader.

against, what knowe we if *Erasmus* in this booke, thought good betweene game and earnest to rebuke the same? And chiefly to perswade (if it might be) a certayne contentation in euery man, to holde hym agreed with such lot and state of lyuyng, as aryseth to hym. For which purpose was I also soonest moued to English it, to the end that meane men of baser wyttes and condition, might haue a maner, comfort, and satisfaction in them selues. In as much as the high God, who made vs all of one earth, hath neuertheless chosen some to rule, and more to serue. Wherat so much lacketh, that the inferiours shoulde repyne, as rather set in the meaner degree, they should thanke God the more: without aspyring to thynges aboue their reache, whiche should drawe more trouble and perylles, then if they absteyned therefro, and gaue place to others, who had greater gyftes of God, and were called by aucthoritie of their prince and countrey to wielde the the same. For surely, if a man of the poorer sort, whose eyes are daseled in beholding the fayre glosse of wealth and felicitie,

To the Reader,

He, whiche the state of a great Lorde or Counsaylour in a common wealth dooth outwardly represent, did inwardly marke the trauayles, cares, and anxieties which such one is driuen to susteyne (dooyng as he ought to doo) in seruyng his maister and countrey, wherby he is nothing lesse then his owne man: nowe I belecue he woulde not muche enuie his state, nor chuse to chaunge conditions of lyfse with hym. But this were euen the chiefeest poynt of wysedome, though fooles (as Follie calleth them) that is to say, vulgare folke are those, that vnwittynge of their treasure, doo in deede enioy this sweete quietnesse, and greatest good turne.

And weighing this foolish booke, after this sence, I weene a profite also maye aryse therethrough to the Readers, besides the delectation, beyng so pithily pleasant as it is. For as *Erasmus* in all his woorkes fauoureth of a lively quicknesse, and spareth not sometyme in graue matters, to sprinkle his style, where he maye snatche oportunitie, with meery conceyred sentences: so in this booke, treatyng of suche a Theme, and vnder suche a person,

To the Reader,

For, he openeth all his bowget: So far forth as by the iudgement of many learned men, he neuer shewed more arte, nor witte, in any the grauest booke he wrote, than in this his praise of Follie. Which the reader hauing any considerāce, shal soone espie, howe in euery matter, yea almost euerie clause, is hidden besides the myrth, some deeper sense and purpose. In deede I gaine saye not, but he maketh Follie to speake at randon, without sparing of any estate of men: but yet indifferent cares will heare their faultes patiently, as long as they may chose, whether they will take the fault vpon the or not: or be a knowne to be those, whom Follie noteth. But euē this franknesse of Follies taunting I haue presumed in some pointes to ytche to the best, namely in two or three places, which the learned reader comparing with the latine booke, may easily perceiue, how either I haue slipped ouer a line or two, or eased the sowre sense of the latine wyth some manerlier English word. Wherein I chose rather to bee counted a scant true interpretour, than otherwise to touche things which were better vsayd, as long

To the Reader.

as it hurted not the 'grace of, the 'booke
though they were omitted. Likewise, in al
my translation I haue not peyned my self
to render word for word, nor prouerb for
prouerb, wherof many be Greeke, such as
haue no grace in our tong: but rather mar
king the sense, I applyed it to the phrase
of our English. And where the prouerbes
would take no Englishe, I aduentured to
put Englishe prouerbes of like wayght in
their places, Which may be thought by
some cunnyng translatours a deadly sin.
But I sticke not for all that, in this foolish
booke to vse mine owne foolishhe

cast. And if it be misliked, I

lasse not grearly though

I loose the prayse

of my Follie.

(. . .)

Follie

Moriae Encomium.

Follie speaketh.



Owe so ever
men commonly
talke of me (as
pardy I am not
ignoraunt what
lewde. reportes
goe on FOLIE,
yea euen amōgs
those that are ve

ryest fooles of all) yet that I am hee, I onely
(I saye) who through mine influence doe
glad both the Gods and men, by this it may
appeare sufficientely: that as soone as I
came forth to say my mynde afore this your
so notable assembly, by & by al your looks be-
gan to clere by: bending the frowning of your
browes, and laughing vpon mee with so me-
rye a countenaunce, as by my trowth me see-
meth, euen that al ye (whō I see here present)
do fare as if ye were well whicled, & through-
ly moysted with the Nectar wine of the Ho-
mericall Gods, not without a portion of the
syrpe of that merueilous hearbe Nepenthes,
which hath force to put sadnesse and melan-
choly

*A fooles pre-
sence stirreth
laughter.*

The praise of Folly,

Folly from the hart: Whereas before ye
 late all beamy, and glooming, as if ye had
 come lately from Troponius caue, by S.
 Patrickes purgatory.

But lyke as when Phebus displayeth
 his golden bright rayes vppon the earth, or
 when after a sharpe stormie winter, the new
 pryncetide flourisheth with his calmest sweet
 Westerne windes, then (loe) a new lykenes,
 a new betw, and a new youth (as it were) re-
 tourneth vnto all thinges: Euen so, as soone
 as I appeared, ye all beganne to looke vp
 lustily. So what thinge these cunninge
 Rhetoricians, for al their long, and forepeni-
 ned Orations, can hardly bring about, (I
 meane, to drawe care and pensiuenesse out of
 the hearers mindes) that haue I with my
 onely looke and presence accomplished.

And now ye shall wis, to what intent at this
 time, in this so straininge an apparell, I am
 come forth amongst you: vpon condition
 ye will not thinke much to bestow on mee
 your eares a while.

I meane not those eares that ye carpe
 with you to Sermons, but those y^e g^ou^ern^ers
 of the eares, to the eares, and to the eares, y^e s^ee
 those (hardye) wherewith my Gentle M^ode

To trilles betw
 ter care g^ou^ern^ers
 then to g^ou^ern^ers
 matters.

das

The praise of Folly;

Has wisdom harkened too the rurall God
Pan, in preferring his rusticall songe, before
Apollons farre finer Melody.

For I purpose a lesen to become a Sophiste,
mistake mee not I pray you, as if I sayed
Sophister, such as nowe a daies, dyne into
childrengs heades, certayne tangled trilles,
with more than womans stubboynnesse, and
scoldinge in their disputations. But I
meane the other, who to the ende they might
shonne that presumptuous name of Sophi or
wisemen, did rather take vppon them to bee
called Sophistes; Whose study and profes-
sion it was, to aduaunce, and sette forth in
theyr wytings the praises both of the Gods
and of men also, such as were famous and
worthy here in earth.

Ye shall heare therefore the prayse sette
forth, not of Hercules nor yet of Solon, but
rather of mine owne selfe, that is to say, of
Folly. In whiche poynt, a straw for all
these cankered Philosophers, and sages, who
saye it is a most outragious follye and pre-
sumption, for one to praise hym selfe.

For truly let them make it as foolish a part
as they like, so longe as they cannot denie
it to be congruent.

And

The prayse of folly.

And what (I praye you) may bee more apte
or better sitting, than dame Folly to prayse
her selfe, and bee her owne trumpet? For
who can liuelier descriue mee, then I my
selfe? Unlesse perhaps some bee better ac-
quainted with mee, then I my selfe am.

Notwithstanding, euen this my selfe praise
(as mee seemeth) I may well take vppon
mee with a more shamefast grace, than to
do as commonly these great & learned men
be, who suborne some glosyng Oratour, or
bayne spoken Poet hyred also for mede, to
dilate and blast forth their praises, or (right-
lyer to saye) painted lies.

Oratours and
Poets.

And yet shall none of those shamefast,
Pauidentlye men, not sticke then to displye
his pecockes fethers, and rowle hym selfe,
whiles such? shamelesse flatterers doe go
about to make him, being a man, lesse worth
than nought, coequall vnto the Gods, in
blasoninge hym for a paragonne, and abso-
lute example of all manner of vertues, from
which he knoweth him selfe too bee as farre
wide, as from hence to the mā in the moone.

Namely whiles those glosers woulde
decke the Crowe with other Byrdes
fethers,

The prayse of folly

fethers, or payne them to wash a Morions
blacknes, or labour of a seely Flye to make
an Elephant. For shorthe, I folow in this
poynt the common prouerbe, which sayeth,
that he may rightly prayse himselfe, whom
none other body wyll.

Allbeit, to saye the trueth, I cannot but
maruell at mens ingratitude (shoulde I
call it) or neglygence: that where with one
assent they all so franklye doe obserue mee,
and gladly peruse my commodities, yet
hath not one of them, now so many reuo-
lutions of yeares passed, vndertaken with
some thankfull Oracion to sette forth the
prayses of mee Follye, whereas some
of them haue not wanted, who with solemne
styles, and much losse of sleepe and candell,
shewed at least theyr Follye, what euer
theyr matter was, in cōmendation, some of
this notable tyraunt, some of that, some in
praise of the Feuer quartane, others in set-
ting forth what commodities be in a Fly,
in baldnesse, or such lyke hatefull thinges.
But at my hande, yee shall heare an vn-
advised, and sodeine tale tolde, though so
much perhaps the truer: Whiche I woulde
not yee shoulde thinke were sayde of mee
for

The prayse of folly.

for a colour, to aduance thereby the ryppeness of my witte, as commonly these learned men doe.

Who puttinge forth (as yee knowe) The varne glasse
of learned
men.
some Booke more than whole thyrye win-
ters had in cullynge, yea and that sometimes
none of theyr owne doyng, wyll sweare
yet, that they made it but for a recreation
of their grauer studyes, or rather as fast as
penne coulde runne. For truly it hath
euer beste lyked mee to speake straight,
what soeuer laye on my tongues ende.
But this, to the ende yee looke not for it, I
doe warne ye of afore hande, that I in no
wyse wyll, accordyng to these common
Sophisters and Rhetoricious manner, goe
about to shew by defynition what I am, and
much lesse vse any diuysyon: In as muche
as I holde both the one, and the other for
vnluckie tokens, either to comprehend her
vnder a certayne ende, or limite, whose influ-
ence stretcheth so vniuersallye, or els to de-
uide hir, in whose obseruance all men doe
so wholly consent. And yet I cannot tell to
what purpose it shoulde serue, to represent a
certayne shadow, or image of my selfe, where
as presently ye may discerne mee with your
eyes.

The prayse of folly

eyes. For I am here (as ye see) the distributrix & dealer of all felycitie, named *Moria* in Greeke, in Latine *Stulticia*, in English, *Follye*. But aye, what needed me to utter thus much: as if I bare not signes ynough in my face, and countenance, what maner personne I am: Or as if some one contendynge that I were *Minerua*, or *Sophia*, might not straight with my onely looke bee confuted though I helde my talke, which is no lyinge myrour of the mindes disposition. For in mee (ye must thinke) is no place for setting of colours, as I cannot saye one thing, and thinke another: but one all wydes I doe resemble my selfe.

Follye dissembled.

So that not so muche as they canne dissemble mee, who take bypon them most semblant of wisdom, and walke lyke *Alleg* in *Lyons* skynnes. That although they counterfeite what they can, yet on some side their long eares pearing forth, do discouer them to come of *Midas* progenie. The unkindest kinde of men lyuing, who being in deede the very standard bearers of my bande, woulde seeme yet afore folke to be so ashamed of my name, as not seldome they cast it in others teeth for a great reproche.

Quint

The Praise of Follie.

Such men therefore, that in deede are arch-
doles, and would be taken yet for sages and
philosophers, may I not aptly call them
foolel philosophers: for as in this behalfe I haue
thought good to borowe a little of the Re-
thoricians of these daies, who plainly think
them selues Demygods, if lyke horseleches
they can shew two tonges, I meane, to min-
gle theyr wytyngs with woordes sought out
of strange languages, as if it were a lonely
thyng for them to poude theyr bokes with
ynkeborne termes, although perchatunce as
vnaptly applyed, as a gold ryng in a sowes
nose. That and if they want suche farre
fetched vocables, than search they out of
some rotten Pamphlet soure or fine disused
woords of antiquitie, therewith to barken
the sence vnto the reader, to the ende, that
who so vnderstandeth them, may repute him
selfe for more cunnyng, and literate: and who
so doeth not, shall so much the rather yet e-
steme it to be some hygh matter, because it
passeth his learning. For this is truely not
the least of my plesant properties, to make
men euer set most store by straunge and out-
landishe thynges. So that some be of such
a baine gloryousnesse, as when they can least

Obscuritie
and affect-
tation of
writers.

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The Praise of Follie

skill therof, yet wyl they flere and nodde the head at it, & (as the Ass doth) wagge theyr eares, to make others beleue that they are depely sene therein. And this is thus, But now I returne to my matter. We haue heard my name: than (O my frindes) what addition shall I geue you? What? but my most foolish friends. For by what more manerly surname may the Goddesse Follie cal her seruants, and alies? But nowe seeing all folkes know not of what lynage I am descended, so helpe me the Muses as I entend to declare the same vnto you.

Folkes for
ether.

My father therfore was neyther Chaos, nor Orcus, nor Saturnus, nor any other of that olde and rustie race of Gods, but Plutus the golden god of riches, and the onely fyre of Gods and men, though Hesiodus, Homer, yea and Iupiter hym selfe stande neuer so stiffly against me. At whose onely becke as aforesayd, so now also both holy, and unholy thynges bee turned to plect turne. At whose arbitrement, warre, peace, kingdomes, counsailes, iudgements, assemblies, mariages, couenances, leagues, lawes, sciences, games, earnest matters (my breath faileth me) to be shopt, all publike

The Praise of Follie.

and priuat doings of men are admittisred.

Without whose ayde, the whole rout of
the poeticaill Gods, yea I wyl say further,
those that be the chofe gods, should either not
be at all, or litle else with a messe of science
chere: That whome so he is agreued with,
Pallas is not able to protect him. And who
so hath hym on his syde, may (if it lyke hym)
desie Iupiter, with al his thunder.

The force
of money.

maps

And such a father (lo) doe I glorie in.

Who neyther begatte me of his braine, as
Iupiter did that bnamitable skowlyng God:
desie Pallas, but of Youth, a Nymph a-

Follies mo-
ther

boue all others most fayre, and goodly. Nei-
ther was he (I warrant you) at the time of
my begetting clogged with the beaute poke
of wedlocke, wherein Vulcane that lym-
phaulc Smyth was boine, but rather mixed
in loue (as my Homer sayth) whiche I take
to be a copulatio not a litle more pleasant thē
the other is. Further, to the end that ye mis-
take nothing, I doo you to wit that Plutus
begate me not in his olde dayes when hee
was blind, and skarce able to goe for age,
and goutinesse, as the Poet Aristophanes
descriueth hym: but in his prime yeres, when
as yet he was sounde, and full of yote bloude.

*will be
and a daye*

*Alas
that time
of the
shadde
of the
of the
of the
of the
of the
of the*

B.ii.

The Praise of Follie

but much fuller of Nectar drinke, which sit-
 ting at bountie with the other Goddesses,
 he had sipped then by chauce somewhat
 more then enough. Now and if ye loke too
 bee instructed also of my birth place, in so
 much as now a dayes men thinke howe the
 countrey where one is borne doeth not a lit-
 tle import towards his nobilitie, ye shal un-
 derstande that I was brought forth neither
 in storping Delos, as Apollo, nor amongs
 the Waving seas, where Venus took hir be-
 ginning, nor yet in holowe rockes un-
 der ground, as was the great God Iupiter,
 but such an doos the Ilandes, which of
 their singuler fertilitie and fruitfulness, are
 called, Fortunate, where as all thynges
 growe beloved and untilled.

Follies
 birth place

Hereto
 ment that
 those which
 are borne
 to most
 wealth,
 proue ma-
 ny times
 most fooles.

In which Iles neither labour, nor age,
 nor any manner sicknesse raigneth, nor in the
 fieldes there doe either Nettles, Thistles,
 Gallowses, Branibles, Cockle, or such lyke
 baggage grow, but in steede therof, Gypsopie-
 res, Roses, Lilies, Basile, Violettes, & such
 sweete smellypng herbes, as whilom grew
 in Adonis gardens, doe on all sides satisfie
 both the sent, and the sight. Thus borne in
 these delices, I beganne not my life with
 teares,

The Praise of Follic.

teares, but what wayes singled sweetly on
my mother, an euident argument and token
of good lucke as these byschlotters saie. Fur-
ther as concernyng my byringng vp, I am
not enuious that Iupiter the great god had
a gotte to his fostresse, seeing two so plesant
Nymphes as Dronkennes daughter vnto
Bacchus, & Rudenes the daughter of Pan
were my nourises. Whome ye may se here
also amonges my other women and hand-
maides about me. Whose names in case ye
liste to know, I am very wel content to re-
herse them vnto you. For this mayd cruelly,
whome ye may behold with browes vpreast,
lokyng euer as if she wondred at something,
is called selfeloue. This nexte hir that fareth
as if she stired vpon you, and clappeth hir
hāds together, is Adulatio. This sluggard,
and drowtie head is named Obluion. This
than that leaneth on hir elbowes, claspynge
hir hands together, is called Lythernesse.
This besydes hir with the Rose garland on
hir head, and all to perfumed with sweete sa-
uours, is cleped Voluptuousnesse. This
with the rolling and vnstedfast eies, is Mad-
nes. This ocher with the slicke skynne, and
sappye fed bodie, is called Delicacie. As for

Follic
nourises.

Follic hand
maides.

B. iii.

these

The praise of Follie.

these two Goddesses, which ye may see also in
the fellowship of my other traine, the one is
named Belicheere, the other Soundleepe.
Now if ye aske mee, what sleepe these stand
mee to? I answer, that though the trustie
ayde of such a bande as this is, I subdue
all the worlde vnder my dominion, bearing
empire ouer Emperours themselves. Ye
haue heard mee thus declare vnto you my ly-
nage, my education, and my familie. But
least nowe I myght causelesse seeme to chal-
lenge the name of a Goddess, hearken ye ther-
fore attentiuely, with how great commodi-
ties I endue both Goddesses and men, and
howe largely my power stretcheth. For and
if a certaine authour wrote not much amisse,
*howe this was properly the office of a God, to
doe benefite to mortall men*: further, if such
haue woorthily been ascribed to the senate of
the Gods, as were first inuentours of wyne,
of Corne, and suche lyke commodities for
your liuing: why shoulde not I than righte-
fully be taken, and set tofore them all, who
onely am the geuer of all things, to all men:
For first (I aske) what may be sweeter or
more dearer vnto you, than is your lyfe:
but the originall spring, and plantation
of

Follies di-
nine opera-
tion

The Praise of Follie.

of the same, whom shoulde ye thanke for,
but mee onely? In as muche as neyther
the speare of Pallas, ne yet the shield of
Iupiter called Aegis, is it, that engendreth
mankynde: but the selfe Iupiter, father of
the Goddesses, and King of Kinges, who wyth
hys onely becke, can shake all Heauen, must
laye downe hys threeforked thunder, and al-
so his grimme countenance, wherewith
when hym lysteth he can make al the goddesses
to tremble, yea and lyke a player must
disguise hymselfe into another personage,
in case hee woulde doo the thyng, that al-
most hee alwayes practiseth (which is) to
get children.

Agayne, amongst mortall men, the
Stoikes, counte them selues to bee next the
Goddesses in perfection. But byng mee
one, admitte hee bee foure, or fyue, or (if
you lyst) fye hundred tymes a Stoike,
and yet must hee laye downe, if not hys
long berde, betokenyng wysedome, which
natheles Goates haue also, at least (I
say) lay alyde his graue, & frowning looke,
he must caulme and explane his forehead,
he must cast away those his proulike lessons,
and preceptes of doctrine, it is I, it is I (he
B. iiii. leene

wisdom
and graue-
tie in chyl-
dren
getting serue
not to pay
poor.

The praise of Follie.

leene mee) whom that wise and sage Stoike must haue recourse vnto, in case he would be a facher. And why shoulde I not commune more familiarly with you, according to my custome? I praye you, is it the head? the face? the bzeast? the handes? or the eares? which partes of the body are named honest, that engender Gods, and men? I trowe no. Naie, it is euen that feelie member, so fonde, and foolishhe, as maye not wpthout laughter bee spoken of, which is the onely planter of mankynde. That is, the onely fountayne, whence all thinges receiue life, a great deale sooner than from Pythagoras quaternion.

Charge,
to procede
of Follie.

As concerning the vse whereof, who is he (suppose ye) would take in his mouth the snaffle of wedlocke, if (according as these wisemen are wont to doo) he shoulde first cast and reckon wiche himselfe the commodities of that trade of lyfe? Or what woman would yeeld vnto a mā, if she epyther knew, or thought vpon the perillous throwes of childbearyng, or trauaile of their byrnyng vp? That and if ye owe your liues to wedlocke, and wedlocke ye owe to my damosell

The praise of folly.

damosel Madnes, now yee may soone gesse,
what yee owe, and should referre to mee.

Chan, who is thee, that after one assaye,
would estsoones venter childe bearynge, ne
were it not through the encouragement of
Oblyuion?

No not Venus her selfe (what soeuer Lucre-
tius writeth) wyl deny, but that her might in
engendyng remaineth voyde, and of small
effect, without the accesse of mine ayde. So
that to conclude, I say how of this my dunc-
ke & ridyculus game, are procreat (omitting
vulgar folke) both graue philosophers, wh^{ch}
such succede now, as ye cal monks, and pur-
pe princes, and holy priestes, and thysse ho-
lye Bishops at once, all the whole route of
the Poeticall Gods, so swarming, as scarce
all Heauen is able to contayne them, bee it
neuer so large of roome.

But take it hardly for nothyng, that yee
owe thus vnto mee the very fountayne and
spring of your lyfe, in case what euer other
commodities yee haue therein, I doo not
moue them also to procede of my goodnes.
For as touching this lyfe here, may it woz-
bely be called a lyfe (I pray you) if ye take
pleasure and delight away? doe you nodde

B. J.

upon

The praise of folly

Upon mee: & wel sayed: I wist there was none
of you all so wise, or rather so foolish, nay
wyle sooner, as would bee of any other opi-
nion. Howbeit, euen these sage Stoikes
doe not in deede, so greatly dispise pleasure,
as outwardly they dissemble, and asore folks
doe haite her with a thousande reppoues, to
none other entent (I warrant you) saue that
when others are rated therefro, they then
may more at lybertye enioye her. But I
woulde they should tell mee, what any parte
of this lyfe there is, not heauy, not unplea-
sant, nor yksome, nor vnsauerye, vnlesse yee
put Pleasure, that is to say, the *Sauce of
Folly* vnto it: for prooofe whereof as I coulde
allege the sufficient authoritie of Sopho-
cles, whose noble sentence in my fauour, is
neuer inough praysed, where hee sayeth, that
In knowing lest, the blisfulst life is led. So
I am content yet for your better instruction,
to disclose euery thinge more particularlye
vnto you.

And fyrste, who is hee but wyll confesse
Childhood, the fyrst age of man, to be most
gracious and acceptable vnto all folkes: for
els, what is it in yong babes that we do hitte
so, we do call so, we do cherishe so, that a very
quinte

The praise of folly:

entense is moued to spare & succour this age,
vnlesse it bee by the allurements of Follie &
which natures circumspection, euē purpo-
sedly, hath adioined to children, to the ende
that with some reputation of pleasure, they
might supple the trauel of their bringers vp,
& prouoke the beneuolēce of such as tend vnto
them. The next age then that succeedeth here
to, I meane Youth, how acceptable (I pray
you) is it to all folkes: how is eche inclined
to it: how willingly doeth euery wight set it
forward: how diligentlȳ doe all men put to
their helping hands: And whereof (trow ye)
proceedeth this grace of Youth, but of mee
onely: through whose benefyt, a young man
knoweth least, & therfore taketh least thought.
Take me a lyer, vnlesse as soone as he wax-
eth elder, beginninge through experience and
disciplines to sauour of Manhode, the incon-
tinēce the floure of his beauty decayeth, his
mirth faueth, his grace waxeth cold, his strē-
gth diminisheth, so that the farther & farther
he is retired frō me, the lesse, & lesse he liueth,
vntil at last, tedious old age do crepe vpon him,
not onely y^eklōe to others, but hatefull also to
himself: which old age (on my cōsciēce) no mor-
tal mā would endure to abid it out, if I again
taking

The praise of folly

taking compassion at their so great labours
and encombzances, dyd not somewhat releue
the same.

That lyke as these Gods of the Poets, are
wont with some transformation or lyknesse
tourning, to succour men ready to peryshe,
so I also (that in mee lyeth) doe reuoke such
aged men as are at deathes doore, and nexte
the pitte, back agayne vnto childehode :

Whereupon, not causelesse, folkes call them
twise children.

Now and if some would aske mee how
I doe transforme them so, I wyl not hyde
so much as that from you. For I byinge
them to the fountaine of my mayden Obli-
uion, called Lethes, which springeth in the
Isles fortunate (for as for the other that run-
neth through the feeldes Elisii, is but a smiall
braunche of this former) to the ende that
as soone as they there haue drunken long for-
getfulness of things passed, they may by little
& little, washing away all the troubles & care-
fulnesses of the mind, becoe childish agayne.
But some perhaps wyl object to mee, and
saye, that such olde men do dote now, & are
past their wits. Yea, be as he may, yet this
is euen the playne recourse vnto childehood.

For

Returne of
olde age to
Childhood.

The praise of folly.

Foꝛ is the same ought els (suppose you) that
doteage, or ignoraunce: is it ought els in chil-
dren that delighteth you, than their indiscre-
tion: Foꝛ who is he that woulde not eschew
and abhorre, no lesse then a monster, a childe
being endued with manlyke reason and ca-
pacitie: Altheremto accordeth this com-
mon pꝛouerbe, I hate the childe, whose
wit tyeneth before the time. Or who
woulde gladly sustaine to haunt, or keepe
company with that olde man, who vnto his
so long pꝛactise, and experyence in thinges,
had added also lyke quicknesse of the minde
and sharpnesse of discourse:

Conclude therefore, that olde age doteth
thorough my benefytte, and yet ye see how
these my good dotardes, shall in the meane
while rest vacant and discharged of al suche
cares and anxieties, wherewith wisemen of
freeliber spirites are wꝛonged continuallye,
and in the meane while become cheryshers
eche of other, by neighbourly gossiping to-
gether, and table playe, feelyng no manner
reprouynesse of this lyfe, which scarce a liue-
lyet age suffereth, yea and sometime learne a
gaine to spell a, m, o, as the olde man of
Plautus doeth, most wretched, in case one
putch

Dotage in olde
men.

The praise of folly.

putch of sound wit remained in them, and yet
through my procurement, most happy being
also deare and welcome to their friends, a-
mongst other respectes, for this that comon-
lye they are very pleasaunt in company, and
merely bespoken. For in Homer ye may
reade how out of Nestors mouth there flowed
wordes sweeter then hony, whereas Achilles
language byted bitter. In Homer also, Olde
men leaninge ouer Troy walles put forth a
swete delinered voyce. As to which regard,
theirs may be preferred before the very grace
of infancy, which sure is much gracious, but
yet partly disgraced, when it lacketh speech,
and chatting, that are euen the chiefeest recrea-
tions of mans lyfe.

Adde hereto, that old age togeth much in chil-
dren, and children likewise will euer bee a-
bout olde folkes. Such is nature, in couplinge
lyke, and like together, for what other thing is
there vnlke betwixt them? saue that Elde, is
fuller of wrincles, and nūbꝛeth more yeres.
Els, their white heares, their toothles iawes,
les proportion of their bodie, mylklonging,
fumbling in the mouth, chattering, fondnesse,
forgetfulness, rechelesnes, for bꝛiefe, all other
condicions be of one degree, so that the mea-

The praise of folly.

ret men approche to olde age, the nearer re-
tourne they to the forme of childehoode, till
at laste, euen lyke children, no tediousnes of
lyse, noz sense of death felt, they depart out of
this world.

Can any of you compare now the other gods
transformations, with this of mine? Who
what they doe in way of displeasure, mee ly-
steth not to reherse: But whom they most fa-
uour, and are pleased with, them (trow I)
they are wont to change into trees, into fou-
les, into grasshoppers, yea or sometime into
serpents, as if it were not a certayne kynd of
pyrrhing, to be altered so into a new lyknes:
wheras I reduce the selfe same man, to the
best, and most pleasaunt parte of all his life.
That and if men had the grace too forbeare
quite from medlyng with wisdom, leadyng
foorth all their life in my service, now (I
wene) there shoulde be no olde age at all, but
rather they shoulde enjoy a most happy & cō-
tinual youth. For se you not (I pray you) how
these wise mē, who are genē to philosophy, or
some such earnest and graue study, do for the
most part waxe hoar, before thei be fully yong
men? whylche vndoubtedly cometh of cares,
and incessant sharp crawelyng of the bypne,
licke

The praise of folly.

little and little sokinge by the lynelpe luyce
of the spirites : where as my fooles on the
other syde, be slicke, and smooth skinned, yea
and well crussed together, Lyke hoglinges
of Acarnania : such as neuer shoulde feele
(I warrant you) any discommoditie of age,
we were it not that sometime by chaunce,
they be infected wpth the contagious com-
pany of wisemen.

Such is the lot of mans lyfe, sufferynge no-
thinge on all partes to bee blisfull. And
beere I may bringe in the approued auto-
ritie of of the prouerbe, whiche affirmeth,
Folly to be the onely lynke, that stayeth
fleeting youth, and kepeth of combrous
age.

Lyke as not causeles men saye by the
Brabanter, that whereas yeares maketh
other people the wiser, they, the longer they
liue, are rooted the deeper in follye. Yet
for all that, where synde you any nation
more iocunde, or meeter for the common
trade of luyng, or that lesse feeleth ages
weight, than this doeth : To whom as in
Country, so also in maners are my Hollan-
ders next neighbours. For why shoulde
I sticke to call them mine : Seeing they
take

The prayse of Follie.

my part so earnestly, as thereby they haue
gotten them my name for an addition, so li-
tle whereof they are ashamed, as they passe
not to boast them selues in it. Let them
that wyl nowe goe and seeke out Medea,
Circes, Venus, Aurora, or I wote neuer
what maner fountaine, to haue their youth
restored, wheras I onely am shee that may,
and ble to doo it. It is I that haue that
marueilous Iuyce, wherewith Memnons
daughter proroged the youth of her grand
syne Tithonus. I am that Venus, through
whose fauour Phaon waxed young againe,
whom therefore Sappho so muche loued.
Wine be those hearbes, if any suche be, and
myne be those charmes, and myne is that
fountaine, that not onely cal youth backe a-
gain, once being vanquished, but also (which
is more desirable) dooth conserue it euerla-
sting. That and if yee doo all subscribe to
this opinion, howe nothing is more pleasant
then youth, and nothing more combersome
then age. Nowe (I trowe) yee perceyue
howe much yee are beholding to me, seeing
I upholde you to so great a weale, so great
an euyl excluded.

Follie the pro-
roger and de-
layer of age.

But what speake I yet of mortall men?

Ei,

search

The Praise the Folie.

Follie com-
maundeth
the gods
also.

search ye (hardly) all heauen, and who that list than scozne he my name, in case he finde any of the Gods not crabbed, and dispisable, vnlesse my influence doe commend him. For why is my cosyn Bacchus euer lyke a strypling & fayre busshed? Forsooth because like a witlesse and dronken companion, passyng his tyme in banquettes, daunces, and plaies, he hath neuer thus much to do with Pallas Goddesse of wisdom. Finally, so little setteth he to be holden wise, as the obseruance that he requireth at mens handes is naught but maygames, shrouinges, and such lyke fantasies. Neyther is he offended with the prouerbe callyng hym a foole, as *Foolisher than Morycus*. For they call him Morycus because uplandishe hobbess in sport are wont at byynging home of haruest, to besinere his image sette before temple doores, with muste, & grene figges. And (lord) with what iestes the writers of the olde Comedies doe taunt him? *O fode God* (say they) *and worthy who shoulde issue out of the gryn of Iupiter*: Yet who would not rather chuse, if choyle were offred, to bee such a foole, and popie as he is, being euer merie conceited, euer younglyke, euer prouokynge men too laughter

The prayse of Follic.

laughter with his sport and plesantnes, then
Iupiter hym selfe, *withal his deepe dissembled
chere*, lokyng so iernely, as geueth terrour
to the godds also? or Pan, who with his so-
daine fraiments and tumultes, bringeth age
ouer al thyngs? Or Vulcanus the lymphale
smith full of smoke & embers, euer filchy with
the tople that he endureth in his forge? Or
elle Pallas my great aduersarie, being so
much redoubted, because she beareth speare
and shielde: who euer she weth a payre of
skoulyng eyes?

But why (I pray you) is Cupide al-
wayes lyke a yong bodie? why? but that he
is a trisler, neyther doing, nor thyng any
wyse acte, I warrant you. Why hath Ve-
nus also her beautie *euery alyke flourishing?*
why? but that she is sybbe vnto me: euen as
hir visage resembleth my fathers colour, for
Homer nameth her *golden Aphroditis*. So,
she is euer synpling, if we credit the poets,
or they counterfaitours the peinters. Dore
ouer, what godhead did the Romaines wor-
ship euer more religiously, then that of Flo-
ra the mother of al pleasures and solaces?

Whobeyt on the other side, who so would

Cii.

narrowlier

The Praise the Folie.

narowlier search, and consider the manner of liuing, euen of those *sawre and glominyng gods*, eyther out of Homer, or other poets, he should finde them (no fayle) as folishe, and dissolute, as these. For what needeth me to alledge meaner Gods Folies: when all ye haue at your fingers endes, howe great a louet *thundring Iupiter* is? Also how graue Dame Diana forgettyng womanhobe, doth nought but hunt all daye longe, visiting by startes, yet her swete harte Endimion? But as for me, I had leuer thei should heare their faultes tolde them of Momus the God of Reprehension, at whose handes so many times they haue ben taunted. Saying, that not long agoe they threw downe him and Atis, headlong togeather to the earth, because that euer with his wyle sawes and admonitions he seemed out of season too farre agaynst theyr felicitie.

Doze Momus therefore wandreth about lyke a bacabond, in as much as no mortal man wyl gladly vouchesaue hym herborough, for feare of Iupiters displeasure, much les that he cā be receued into princes courts, for there my Adulation beareth the swinge, who agreeth no more with Momus, then

Lambes

The prayse of Foillie.

Lambes doo with the Woolfe. So that since he is once remoued, the Gods aboue maye nowe muche franklyer, and at moze libertie play their pageauntes, *leading foorth an easie lyfe* (as Homer saith) where as no controller dare call them to account. For (Lorde) the spozte that Priapus the great tooled God maketh them: What pastyme haue they at Mercurius, with his theft, and iuglyng: Not so muche as Vulcane, but when the Gods are set at banquet, hee playeth the Taster, nowe with his lymphauling, nowe with his scoffyng, and nowe with his ouerthwarte woordes, to prouoke them all to laughter. Then cometh Silenus that hoare headed louner, treading the Hornepipe, with Poliphemus boysterously stamping, and the Nymphes trippying bare footed, the Satyres halfe Goates dauncyng the Antikes: And Pan with his Oten Flute singeing some rurall song, dooth wonderously delight them, as whom, at that tyme, they had rather heare, then the Muses them selues: chiefly, when they begynne to be thzoughly chaufed with their Nectar drinke.

Flattery familiar in princes courts.

But what shoulde I tell you of that

C.iii.

the

The Praise the Folie.

the Gods doo after suche compotations: things so foolish, as I my selfe can scant re-
fraine from laughter. It is best therefore
that herein I remember Harpocrates for
his silence, least some euesdropper God doo
hearken me blabbing forth such thinges of
them, as not Momus hym selfe spake euer
unpunished. So nowe it is tyme, that (folo-
wing Homers example) I leaue the Gods
aboue, and make returne to the earth, to dis-
cusse, howe nothing here is either glad some
or desirable, vlesse the same begyn at me.

Follie natural
to mankynd.

For first, yee see with how great prouidence
Nature the foundresse of mankind, hath fore-
cast, that no where, in any part of mans life,
the sauce of Follie should be wanted. For if
wisedome (according to the Stoikes defini-
tion) is nought els, then to be ruled by reason,
and follie to be led as affection wyll: consider
nowe (I pray you) howe muche more affe-
ction, then reason, Iupiter hath put in men,
to the ende their life shoulde not altogether
be heauie, and vnpleasaunt. As if ye shoulde
compare an ounce to a pounce.

Furthermore, he shutt vp Reason with-
in the narrowe compasse of mans head, lea-
uynge al the rest of the body to affections: set-
ting

The prayse of Follie.

ting also two most violent tyrantes agaynst her, that is to say, Anger, raignyng in the fortreffe of the hart: and Concupiscence, whiche euen to the lowest part of the belly, dooth occupie a large possession. Agaynst these two so strong champions, howe much Reason maye resist, the common trade of mens lyues declareth sufficiently. That whereas Reason, as muche as lyeth in her, dooth crye againste them, euen tyll shee be hoarse, alleging what honestie wyll, and requireth, yet disdain not they to obey, but much more furiously doo repine at her, tyll at last shee also being weered, is faine to peelee for banquished. But in so muche as to man bozne to gouerne and rule, Iupiter thought it meete to distribute Reason somewhat in a larger assise, to the ende yet he might partly alay the excesse, he called me, (as he is woont) amongs the other Gods to counsaile: and by and by I gaue hym aduise like my selfe, that a woman shoulde be associate vnto hym. A creature (God knoweth) both foolishhe & vnwittie, but neuertheless pleasaunt, and gracious. To the ende that throughe dayly companye, and dwelling togeather, shee with her follie might release,

Jupiter called
Follie to coun-
saile.

Follie of wo-
men.

C.iiii,

and

The Praise the Folie,

and make dulcet the sadnesse of mans courage. For where Plato seemeth to doubt, whether he shoulde put a woman among reasonable, or unreasonable creatures, it was no more, but to shewe and expresse the notable Follie of that sexe. So that if any woman Audpeth to bee counted wise, shee dooth nought els but labour to be twise foolish: as if ye would force a Cowe agaynst her nature, to leape through a hoope. For the fault is doubled, when soeuer one against kinde, would counterfeite a glose of vertue, to withe the mynd oherwise, then of nature it plieth: According as the Greeke prouerbe saith, *An Ape is an Ape, be shee clothed in Purple,* so a woman is a woman, (that is to saye) a foole, what soeuer part shee play, Yet I thinke not that women are so very fooles, to be angry with me heretofore, that I being folie her selfe, and a woman al'o, do arrect folie vnto them. For if they weigh al thinges indifferently, they shal soone perceiue howe much I am to be thanked, that for many respectes they are farre happier then men be. First, for their beauties sake, beauty (I say) whiche not without good cause is had in so great price by them, as vnder whose shield & protection,

That commodities women haue by Folie.

The Praise theFolie.

protectiō, they do exercise tyranny, yea ouer tyrants them selues. For els, whence cometh to men that sternesse of theyr visage, roughnesse of skinne, and thicknesse of theyr beardes, beyng a very representation of oldnesse, sauing of the excelle, or rather diseale of wisdom? Whereas women with theyr smooth cheekes, smal voyces, & fine skyns, doo euer shew a certaine youtlikenesse. Againe, what is it in this life, that women sooner couet, then to be lyked of men? Tend not (crow ye) to this effect, so many theyr attyres: so many paintyngs: so many bathinges: so many beare curlyngs, so many glisshes: so many perfumes: so many wayes of nyce simpzyng, nyce simplng, nycest gopng, be it but on an yntch of lether, and al to set them selues forth to the shewe: Further, what greater priuiledge haue women ouer men, then theyr foolishnesse: For what is it, that men permit not as leaful, or at lest to be borne with, in women: but vnder what other title, the of delectation? But how do they delight mē, sauing with theyr follie:

This to be true, can not be denyed, who so will consyder with hym selfe what sonde talke and deuises a man is faine to fynde

E. v.

out

The Praise the Folie.

out, as often as hee entendeth too take fruition and pleasure of a woman. And thus I haue declared you from what spring the first and chiefeſt recreation of this your life is deriued.

*Follie of feaſts
and banquets.* But yet ſome perſons there bee, namely olde men, rather good Halloweemes, than women haunters, who contrarie to my ſuppoſition will put their greateſt felicitie in tipling, and good fare. As touching which pointe, I referre it to others iudgement if any feaſt or banquet bee made in the ryght kynd, unleſſe women are at the ſame. But of this I am ſure, How without the ſauce of Follie, no banquet can be to the ſome. In ſort that there want one, who with his owne, or counterſait Folie, may ſurre the geſtes to laughter, then ſtraght is ſome ieſter, or other mad knaue ſent for with his bald and fooliſh ſcoffes, to put away the ſadde ſtylneſſe of the feaſt. For els, what booted ſo many iunkets, ſwete meats, and dainties to balace the bellye withal, unleſſe the eyes the eares, and the whole mind, were alſo fedde with laughter, ſporte, and mery conceites.

But of all ſuch knackes I am the onely demifour, lyke as this that now is ſolemnely
taken

The Praise the Folie.

taken by at banquets, to choose a Kyng by
lottes, to play at Tables, to bryng good lucke,
to quasse about the bownde, to sing Carols, with
such like obseruances, was neuer ordeyned
by the seuen Sages of Greece, but through
myne inuention, for the conseruation, and a-
uaile of mankinde. Yet marke you the na-
ture of all such deuises, and yee shal see, that
the more follie they smel of, the more they do
profite the life of mortall men. Whiche
life, in case it be overweighed with sadnesse,
then surely it scantly deserueth the name of
life. And sadde must it needes be, vnlesse
with some kinde of pastyme yee wipe away
tediousnesse, next coosin to the other.

Nowe some perchaunce there are, who Follie authour
of friendship.
litle wyl esteeme this kinde of pleasure also,
but rather rest wholly on the league and ac-
quaintance of one friende with an other: af-
firmyng friendship to be the onely thing
whiche shoulde be sought and embraced be-
fore all the other commodities of your life,
being (say they) so necessarie and behoua-
ble, as neither Ayre, nor Fyre, nor Water
may be more requisite vnto men, and there-
to so appropriately annexed, as the sunnes
heate may as soone as friendship be spared
amonges

The Praise the Folie.

among you: and besides this, so honest a thing (if honestie as you thinke make oughe to purpose) as not the Philosophers themselves doo sticke to put friendship euen amongs the chiefest weales of this life.

But what wpll yee saye now, if I can proue my selfe to be both croppe and roote, of this so great a benefite? Proue it to you, (I say) neither with Barbara, nor Celarent, nor any such Dialectical quaint subtilties, but euen of the playnest and bluntest fashion, poynt you to it, as it were with my finger: First therefore when you see a man flatter, dissemble, or winke at his friends faultes, yea and sometyme owe fauour, or rather woonder at some great vices of his, taking them for vertues: do you not count hym (I pray you) next lybbe, to a foole? What if an other take some deformitie that his Leman hath, for a great grace: or a father, whose childe is squint eyed, calleth hym neuerthelesse his prety pinkeyed boye: Is not this (trowe yee) plaine follie? Let Sages crie againe and againe, that it is follie, yet this same folly is the glew that souldreth & interteineth friends together: I speake of mortal men, of whom none liueth without some

Folie the glew
of friendship.

The Praise the Folie.

Some fautes : so that he may wel be holde for
the best , that is combrzed with the smallest.
Wheras amongs these gods of wisdome, ei-
ther no friendship can fasten at al, or if it do,
yet is it but a frownyng , and an vnpleasane
friendship, & such as taketh place among ve-
ry few of them : for it were too soze to say a-
mong none, seeing the most part of men doo
ouerthoote them selues : yea, if I said all, I
might abide by it, so many sundry wayes is
euery wight subiect vnto follie. And friend-
ship is neuer properly knyght, but betweene
men of egal estate & condition. That admyt
sometyme a maner amittie is so kindled be-
tweene these Wise men : God knoweth yet
howe short a life, & continuance it shal be of,
namely among so wayward faultfinders, as
as commonly such sages are, being cuer redy
to find an hole, & casting as sharp an eye vpon
their friends fautes, as an Eagle dooth vpon
her pray. But (Lord) for al that, how poze-
blind are they in their owne? not once loo-
king backe at the Satchel hanging behynd
them. In as much then as the nature of mē
is such, that no wight may be fcsid, not limed
with some great vices, in case ye adde ther
to the diuersnesse both of mens inclinations,
and

Wayward-
nesse in friend-
ship.

The Praise of Follie.

Forbearng.

The god of
loue blinde.

and ages, together with so many ouersights,
so many errors and chaungyng chaunces,
as this mortall lyfe is disposed to, now I
see not how the fruite of frendships plesaunt-
nesse should one halfe howze be conserued
betwene so narrowe discussers of things, vn-
les the remedie of *forbearng one an other*,
which also in Greeke, is as much to say, as
Follie were added for a staie and maynte-
nance of the same. But what say ye? Cupide
himselfe the god of all loue and frindship, is
he not blind: to whom as oftentimes not sayze
thynges seeme sayze, so likewise amonges
you he bringeth to passe, that each doth
thynke his owne birde sayrest, and like wil
euer cleaue to like.

Now though we see, howe commonly
these things are don, and commonly laugh-
ed to scozne, yet such fondnesse is it that soul-
drezeth & holdeth a plesaunt felowship of life a-
twixe you. Further, what I haue saide by
frindship, much more may I say by mari-
age. Which is to say, *an inseperable con-
iunction of man and woman*. But (Lord)
what diuorcementes, or inconueniencies
worse then diuorcement would not common-
ly happen, in case they dailie societie, and
dwelllyng

The Praise the Folie.

dwellng together, were not now with
flaterie, now with dalyance, now with spote,
with forbearng, with errour, with dissem-
blyng (all of my gard I warrant you) both
propped vp, and nourished: Good lord,
how few spousayles shoulde goe through, in
case the wooer wisely afore hand did boult
out, what wanton parts the tender, and to his
seemyng, shamefast mayden hath played
longe afore he knew hir: Further, howe
few mariages once solemnised, shoulde con-
tinue in force: vnlesse the moste part of the
wiues pageants were cloked, eyther through
hir husbands negligence, or doltishnesse? All
this, and worthily, is arrected to Follie. Yet
doth this folie make the wife to be cherished
of hir husband, the husbände likewise of his
wife, theyr house to be quiet, and the affinitie
betwene theyr friends to remaine. *The cocke-*
holde witolde, or what other name ye list to
geue hym, is laught to scozne, whē with his
lyps he sucketh in the teares of his scant ho-
nest wife. Yea good enough, How much bet-
ter shal he find it to be deceined so, thē thoro-
welousie to free hym selfe, and set al things on
a roze. For shorte conclusion (I saye)
so

The Praise of Follie.

No societie of
lyfe without
Folie.

so much lacketh, that any maner friendship,
societie of life, or companying together,
may without myne accesse bee pleasant, or
long liued: as not the people woulde long
beare theyr ruier, nor a seruant his maister,
a mayd hir maistres, a scholer his teacher, a
friend his friend, the husband his wife, a len-
der the hirer, a chamberfelow his chāberfe-
lowe, nor a bourdmate his bourdmate, vnles
by turnes atwixe them selues they shoulde
somtime erre, somtime flatter, sometimes
winke for the nonce, and now & then com-
fort theyr bittered tast with some hony of foo-
lishnesse. These things (I wote wel) seme
right marueilous vnto you, but geue me
leauē a little, and ye shal heare furher.

None accep-
table can hynt
selfe without
Folie.

I pray you, can ye loue any bodie, that
loueth not him selfe? can he agree with any
body, that discordeth with hym selfe? May
he please others, that is displeasent, and redi-
ous to hym selfe? But setting me aside, so
much lacketh, that any man can abide or
beare what others doe, as ye shall see him
fall out with him selfe, mislike what soeuer
he dooth, & be his owne hater.

For nature not in few poyntes rather a
stepdame than a mother, hath grafted this
guill

The praise of follic.

euill proprietie in mens heads, namely theirs
that are skilfuller, that euer they despyse
what qualitie is their own, & set more by that
they see in others. Wherby it comes to passe
that all the gistes, & graces, of this life, are
quite lorne and defaced. For what auaieth
beautie: beautie (I say) the very chiefest gift
that the immortall Goddess doo geue here, if
he that hath it, recketh not of it? Or what
auaileth yowth? If it bee drowned with the
leuaine of hoie sadnesse. Finally in any ma-
ner trade of lyfe, what can a man go about
to doo seemely, and with a good grace, either
by himselfe, or afore others (as in deede, to
expresse and set a thyng forth lyuely, is not
onely the chiefest poynt of cunning, but also
the very head of any thing put in vze) if this
my damosel Selfeloue be not his aduancer,
whom woorthily I holde therefore in steede
of my syster: so busily shee trauaileth to my
behalfe in euery place. And what can bee
more folly, than one to like himselfe, & stand
in hys owne conceyte: but than againe,
what thing can be proper, or becomming, or
well doone, in case the doer of the same mys-
lyketh himselfe in it? So that take awaye
this sauct of Selfeliking, which is euen the

Selfloue...

The praise of follie.

berie releafe of mans life and doings, and by
and by ye shal see the Oratour colde in hys
matter, the Musitian misliked with all his
descant, the Player hissed out of the place, the
Poet and his muses laught to scozne, the
Paynter and his art naught set by, the Phi-
sician for all his medicines walke an hun-
gred, briefely, this set a syde, he that seemed
beautifull Nireus, shall appeare to be more
uglye and misfaouered than Ther sites, in
steede of faire Phaon, as hoze and wrinkled
as Nestor was, for Minerua, a sowe (as the
prouerb sayth) for an eloquent speaker, the
fowlest stammerer in a countrey, and for a
courtlyke fellow, the rudest hobbe that maye
be picked from the plough. So behouerable
is it (loe) that euery man doo clappe hym
selfe on the backe, and with some flatterie be
commendable to himselfe, ere he can be com-
mended of others. If inally, wheras it is the
greatest part of felicitie, for a man to desyre
to bee, as he is in deede, that dooth Selfe-
loue procure you by a readier way. For no
man, how euer vile he be, will so dispaire in
himselfe, as vterly to mislike either his wit,
his kinred, dwelling place, occupation, or
countrey. As an Irish mā would not chaunge
his

Eache man
through
Follie stan-
deth in selfe
conceite.

The praise of follie.

his nation with an Italian, noꝝ a Turke with
an Athenyan, noꝝ yet a Tartar with the be-
rie Iles of Fortune: which so beyng, howe
singuler then is natures prouidence (trowe
ye) in so great varietie of thinges, to make
them al yet of a lyke propoꝛtion: as to whom
thee hath beene somewhat scarce in other
giftes, there she putterh a little moꝛe Self-
liking, but this I speak not very circūspect-
ly, seeing the same Self liking, may woꝛthily
be esteemed foꝛ the greateſt gift of all. Here
now I recke not much, to passe ouer vntou-
ched, how no maner acte, oꝛ noble deede was
euer attempted, noꝝ any arte oꝛ science inuē-
ted, other, thā of which I might fully be hol-
den first authoꝛ. If oꝛ as touching warre, the
very head and spring of al great enterprises,
which so commōly are praised, & enrolled by
hystozians, is it not (trow ye) a foolishhe prac-
tise, to beginne such variance, as euer both
parties receyue moꝛe damage than profite
by: (foꝛ of those that leane their carkasses in
the fildes, as dyd the Megarensians, neuer
comte is made.) But yet, when armies
ioyne together, & trumpets blow by bloody
notes, to what steepe I praye you can these
good father Sages serue: who soked by with

Folly authoꝛ
of all noble
actes and
artes.

warre.

The praise of follie.

long studie, leane, and colde of blood, maye
scantly drawe their wynde: May then must
fatte and lustie blooddes doo the feate, ha-
uving boldnesse with the most, and witte with
the least. Unlesse perchance some woulde
chose such a soldour as was Demosthenes,
who following Archilocus the poets reade,
scarle looking his enemies in the face, threw
downe his shilde and ranne away, as row-
ardly a warriour, as he was a wyle oratour.
But Counsaile in warres (say they) is of great
importaunce, & as for that I stick not much,
that counsaile in a capitaine is requisite, so
it be warly ke, and not philosophicall. For
commonly they that bring any valiant feate
to passe, are good blooddes, venturers, compa-
nions, swasches, dispatchers, bankrowtes, with
such lpe, and none of these Philosophers can-
delwafters. Who how vnniete they bee to
serue for any common affaire, or purpose a-
mongest men, wee may be taught by the ex-
ample of Socrates hymselfe, the onely wyle-
man, but unwisely iudged by Apollos ora-
cle. That whereas on a time he went about
to haue sayde hys minde in a certayne mat-
ter to the commons of Athenes, he left of so-
deinly, being all to laught to scozne. How be

The paaise of follie;

It this Socrates, as in one poynt (me semeth)
was not all wyde, in that he would not take
vpon hym the name of a wise mā, but rather
ascribed the same vnto God onely, and
thought it best for a wiseman not too bulie
himselſe or medle with matters of the com-
mon wealth, vnlesse perhaps he myght haue
saied more ryghtly, that who so would be ta-
ken amongs the number of men, should not
medle to much with wisdom. For I pray
you what draue Socrates vpon his araign-
ment, to drinke popson, for the death he was
condemned to, sauing onely that his excel-
lent, that his goodly qualitie of wisdom?
Because whiles whole dayes together he
trifled out the time, in disputations vppon
the clouds, vpon Ides, & by Geometrie peyned
hym selfe to meate a flies feete, discussyng also
how a gnatte, beyng so little a vermine myght
yelde so great a sounde, he neuer applied him
selfe to learne thynges perteyning to this
common trade of lyfe. But nowe comureth
Plato his discipule to defend his maister at
the barre: a gay Aduocate (I promise you)
who being offended with the noyle of the
people throngyng about hym, coulde scante
make an end of the fyrst clause of his tale.

Diii.

And

The praise of follie.

all semen
darstards,
eether to
feght, or
speake in a
pseale.

And what say you by Theophrastus? who ta-
king vpon him to speake vnto a great assem-
bly, as soone as he stood by, by and by could
say neuer a word, as if he had seen a wolfe at
unwares: & how should he then haue encoura-
ged souldiours to fight? Or else Isocrates?
Who of a certaine naturall timorousnesse,
durst neuer afoze audience open his lippes:
Marcus Tullius, the father of Romaine elo-
quence, euer with an vnseemely trëbling be-
gan his orations, as it were a sobbing child,
which Quintiliã enterpreteth to be the signe
of a ware and wyse Oratour, who pondred wel
the waightnesse of his matter. But when he
saith so, dooth he not plainly confesse, wise-
dome to be an obstacle against any bold fear:
For what will suche shrëmpishe bodiës doo
(trow ye) whē it cōmēth to hand strokes, that
are almost dead for feare, whē they strue but
with bare wordes: And yet after all this (on
Gods name) is that woorthysawē of Plato
much commended, how those common weales
most happily should flourish, that were gover-
ned by Philosophers, or whose gouernours ap-
plied themselves to Philosophie. No no, if ye
looke in histories, ye shal find, norisers were
euer more pēdilent to a common weale, thē
if the

The praise of follie.

If the same at any time fell into the handes of such a one, as was giuen to any sect of Philosophie. For proöfe wherof, I alledge vnto you the two Catons, the one whereof, with his headie and frantike arculations, disturbed greatly the quiet of Rome citie: the other, in goyng about ouer wysely to protect the same, dyd vtterly subuert it. And ioyned hardly to them both Brutus and Calsius, with the two Gracchi, yea and Cicero himselfe, for as pestilent a Citizen amongst the Romaines, as Demosthenes was to the Atheniens common weale.

Likewise, what trowe ye by Marcus Aurelius? I admit he was a good Emperour, and yet coulde I wryte that prayse also from him, because his too much Philosophership made hym odious and hatefull to the people. But admitte (I say) he was good, yet truely more pernicious was hee to the common weale, in leauyng so vngracious an ympe, as Comodus was, for successeur is bys state, then euer he was profitable through bys owne good wealding of the same.

For commonly this kynde of men, that are bookishe, and geue themselves to such peniſhe disciplines, like as in other things,

allſemeng
children
commonly
fooles.

D.iiii.

to

The praise of follie.

To also in childre gettyng haue very ill lucke,
as if nature of pitie (I weene) prouided that
this plague, this disease (I say) of wisdomē,
shoulde not sprede ouer largely amongst
men. So Cicero had a sonne, farre vnlike
hym in conditions. And Socrates, that
wiseman had Children, lyker to their mo-
ther than theyr Father, (As one wryteth me-
rily) that is to saye, they were fooles.

Nowe though these wysemen be as vnapt
for all publyke offices and affayres, as an
Asse is to finger an harpe, yet myght it so be
abdyden, if they were not also as vnto-
warde in any priuate duetie pertepning to
this life. For bid once one of these sages to
dinner, and either with his silent glooming,
or his darke and eluyshe problemes, hee wyl
trouble all the bourde. Desire him to take
handes in a bzail, ye will say, a *Camel daun-
ceth*. Bring him to a *Hydromer* watch, or a
stage playe, and euen with his very looke
he wyl seeme to disdeyne the peoples pas-
tyme, so that wyseman *Cato* must be faine
to auoyd the place, because he cannot spare his
frowning. Let him ligh on a knot of good cō-
pany talking merily, & by & by euery wight
holoes his peace. If he must buy any thing,
make

Wisemen
vnsitte for
any functi-
on of this
lyfe.

The praise of folly.

make a bargain, or breefly, do ought of those things which this comon lyfe cannot bee led without, then sooner wyl yee take him for a block, thā a resonable creature. So much lacketh (loe) that hee may stande his countrype or his friendes in profytable steede, who neyther is skilled in thinges dayly enured, and much differeth from the common opinion, and manners of the other people.

Per consequent whereof, he must needes deserue their hatred and displeasure. through the great diuersities of livinges, and dispositiōs betwixt them. For and if ye lyst to iudge indifferently, is there ought done here amongst mortall men not full of folly, both by fooles and before fooles? So that if one onely wight would take vpon hym to kicke agaynst all the rest, him would I aduise (as Timon dyd) he should shrink into some desert, there to enioye hys wisdom too hymself.

But to retourne to my former purpose, (Iaxe you) what manner charme it was, that enduced those auncient stonpe, woddens, and rude men in the worldes fyrst age (as poets faine, disperfed so abrode, to lye together, but onely Adulation or glorification: For what doe Poets els signifye

Will some saye
deth hatred.

Folly the founder of States
& common weales.

Adulation.

D. b.

nifpe

The praise of Folly;

nisse by that sweetetuned harpe of *Amphion* and *Orpheus*? What thing also reuoked the communalty of Rome, rebellynge against the Senate, to agreement: was it any *Philosophicall oration*? No forsooth. What than: Euen a foolish *Aesopes* fable feigned of the bealy, and the other limmes of mans body.

Like as *Themistocles* perswaded the *Atheniens* by his tale of the Foxe and the Hedgehogge: Could any wyse mans Oracion (trowpe) haue enduced those wylde and Sauage Spaniardes to such a conformance, and obedience, as did *Sertorius* their wply captaine, vnder colour of Relygion, and that deuice of his white hinde: Or as *Lycurgus* allured the *Spartanes* through the example shewed them of the two dogs: with also that other fond deuise of *Sertorius*, making two hoxses rayles to be plucked at: I let passe *Minos*, and *Numa*, each of whom with feigned fayre inuentions bleared the grosse multitudes eyes: For yee must thinke that such lyke folyes as these, are the lyuelyest and most profitable perswasions, that the mightye mad beast the commonaltie can be moued with: Whereas hitherto was neuer Citie or commonweale, that woulde bee gouerned by *Platoes*

The praise of folly.

or Aristotles lawes, no more than any nation hath folowed those gloypous rules and institutes of lpying, that Socrates set forth. But I praye you, what prouoked both the Decians willingly to bequeath them selues to the Infernall Gods? And lyketwise egged Quintus Curtius to cast hymselfe into the great caue and swallow of the grounde, that whilom opened in the marketsteede of Rome, sauing onely Vaineglorye: Vaineglorye (I saye) that most fayre, and sweete bayted Her mayde, but (Lorde) how wonderously yet condemned by these sages? For what can bee a more sonde parte (saye they) than ambicioustye, as in common weales is vled, *A man to go, and faune on hym, and him, for their voyces? or with makinge common giftes and distributions to buie the peoples fauour? hyghly magnifying himselfe, whan the people cryeth a largetes on him? When also like a pageant, or spectacle prepared for the peoples eyes, he rides about in triumph, crowned with lawrel? hauing his image for a memory of the fact set vp in the marketsteede, with much curius enttling of his names, surnames, bynams, & office names, besides the immortal, and godly honors, that ar therupō decreed, so so*

Vaineglorye.

The praise of Folly,

and poore a catine as he is, least deseruynge then, as not seldome the veryest tyrantes that euer raigned, haue natheles with publike ceremonies bene cannyoned into the number of the Gods.

These are thinges as foolish as can bee, to laugh whereat, one Democritus smilseth not. And yet, euen of this spring of Vaineglorie come all your worthe Conquerours actes, and famous feates, whiche with the stile of so many eloquent writers are extolled by too heauen. This verpe bzaunche of Follie buildeth Cities, foundeth States, Headrulers, religions, counsell mores, iudgments, and briefely, all the deedes and lyfe of mortall men, is nought els then a certayne great play of Folly.

Folly Inuentress of sciences.

Now what I haue sayed hereby, as well I may saye by artes and sciences. For what els hath prouoked mens wittes to seeke out & disclose to their posteriors so many goodlye disciplines (as they take them) saynge onely an ardent thirst of glory? Such is the appetite of foolish mē, with so great trauels, watchings, & sweating at the browes, to recouer a litle, I wotte neare what Fame, which either is nothing, or nothing is more vaing

The prayse of folly.

vaine than it : But in the meane while,
yee ought too comie mee thanke, for suche,
and so many commodities, as they haue
founde out towarde the better state of your
lyfe. And that (which is most sweete of
all) yee doe peruse the fruite of other mens
madnesse.

Then say, seeing I haue thus chalenged
vnto mee the prayse of Fortitude, and of in-
dustriousnesse, what if I claime Pru-
dence also: perhappes some wyll saye, as
soone might I goe about to mingle fyre and
water.

Lette pru-
dence to come
of Folly.

But for all that I hope to bringe
it to passe, if as hethercoo you haue doone, ye
boursafe mee your eares, and attentive-
nesse.

And fyrsle of al, if Prudence con-
sisteth in longe prattise and experyence of
thinges, vnto whether of these maye the ho-
nour of that name better square: Epyther
to this wyseman, who partelye for shame
and partely for dastardenesse of hart, attempt-
eth nothyng, or els that foole, whom nei-
ther shame, beinge shamelesse, nor perill,
beinge reckeles, may feare from prouynge
any thinge. A wiseman reports hymselfe to
his booke, and there learneth naught but
meere triflyng distinctions of wordes.

A foole

The prayse of folly

**Fooles iudge
rightlyer than
wise men.**

**Lets of know-
ledge.**

**The Silenes
of Alcibiades**

A foole in ieoparding, and goyng presentlye where things are to be knowne, gathereth (vnlesse I am deceiued) the perfect true prudence. Which Homer seemeth, notwithstanding his blindenesse to haue seene, when hee sayed thus, *A foole knoweth the thing, that is once doone.* For there bee two strong lets against such knowledge of thinges too bee gathered, that is to saye, shame and dreade: shame, that casts a mist before mens minds: and dread, that shewyng the perils, discourageth men from ventring any enterpryses. But I follye may, and am wont to wpye those lets cleane away. Wea, few men consider, how many wayes els it auayleth to blush at nothing, and dare doe euery thinge. But now (loe) and if pee take prudence after the rate, as when it resteth in iudgement and discourse of thinges, harken pee (I praye you) how farre they are wide thereof, who doe make it their chiefe profession. For first it is not vnknowne, how all humane thinges lyke the *Silenes* or double images of *Alcibiades*, haue two faces much vnlike and dissimblable, that what outwardlye seemed death, yet looking within, ye shoulde fynde it lyfe: and on the other syde what seemed lyfe, to be death;

The prayse of folly.

death: what sayre, to be foule: what riche,
beggerly: what cunning, rude: what strong,
feeble: what noble, vile: what gladsome, sad:
what happy, vnlucky: what frendly, vnfrend-
ly: what healthsome, noysome. Briefly, the
Silene once beinge vndone and disclosed, yee
shall fynde all thinges tourned intoo a new
semblance. If these wordes to some sreme
spoken clarkly, goe to, I wyl expound them
more playnely.

I pray you, who is hee that confesseth not a
Prince to be both riche, and a great Lorde:
but set case hee hath no good qualyties of
the minde, nor with all those goodes he hath,
cann be satisfi'd: now is he not riche, but
poorer then the poorest. Then agayne ad-
mitte he be geuen to sundry vices, now is hee
no Lorde, but more subiect than a seruaunt:
and after this rate may ye skanne also the o-
thers. But this is ynough for example.

Now it may be, ye muse what I meane here-
by, but geue me leaue yet a litle further. If
one at a solemne stage play, would take vpon
him to pluck of the platers garments, whyles
they were saying theyr partes & so discipher
vnto the lokers on, the true & natie faces of
eche of

The prayse of folly
of the players, shoulde hee not (tr ow yee)
marre all the matter? And well deserue for
a madman to be pelted out of the place with
stones: yee shoulde see yet straightwayes a
new transmutation in thinges: that who be-
foze played the woman, should than appeare
to be a man: who seemed youth, should shew
his hozebeares: who counterfaited the king,
should tourne to a rascall, and who played
God almighty, shoulde become a Cobler as
he was befoze.

Pet take away this errour, and as soone
take away all together, in as much as the
feigninge and counterfetinge is it, that so
delighteth the beholders. So lykewise,
al this life of mortal men, what is it els, but a
certayne kynde of stage playe: where as
men come forth disguised one in one araye,
and another in another, eche playing hys
parte, till at last, the maker of the playe, or
Bookebearer causeth them to auoyde the
skaffold, and pet sometime maketh one man
come in, two or thre times, with sundrye
partes and apparell, as who befoze represen-
ted a king, being clothed al in purple, hauing
no more but shifted himself a litle, shuld shew
hym self againe like a woe begon myser.

And

The prayse of follic.

And al this is done vnder a certaine veile
of shadow, which taken away once, the play
can no more be played.

Here nowe if one of these wise men come
(I weene) from heauen, dyd sodainely ap-
peare, and say, howe euen this great prince,
whom al men honour as their God and soue-
raigne, deserueth scarce to be called man, see-
ing like the brute beastes, he is trayned by af-
fections, and is none other then a seruauant of
the basest sorte, seeing willyngly he obeyeth so
many, and so vile vices his maisters. Or then
again, woulde bydde some other, who mour-
ned for his fathers or friendes decease, rather
to laugh and be meery, because such dying to
this worlde, is the beginnyng of a better life,
whereas this here, is but a maner death as it
were. Furthermore, woulde cal an other glo-
rying in his Armes and Auncestrie, both a
villaine and a bastarde, because hee is so ma-
ny discentes disallyed from vertue, whiche is
the onely roote of true Nobilitie. And in
suche like sorte would raile vpon all the rest.
I pray you, what shoulde be preuayle there-
by, but make men take hym for frantike and
distrayght? For surely as nothyng can be
more foolishe, then wisdom out of place, so

C. i.

is

The prayse of follie.

is nothing more sonde than prudence out of season. And dooth he not out of season (crow pee) that plieth not hymselfe as the worlde goeth: nor will not take the market as it ryseth nor at the lease remembre the Lawe of quasspung, *Either drinke thy drinke, or ryse, and goe thy waye?* On the other syde, it is a verie wylemans part to coueite too knowe nothyng beyond his bandes, and eyther as the whole multitude of other mē do, to dissemble gladly, or to erre, and bee deceyued with the most. But euen this is Folye (say they.) And in good faith I wil not much denie it, vppon condition agayne they graunt mee, that to dissemble, or erre so, is the right playing of the pageantes of this lyfe.

But (Lorde) a thing now is come to my remembrance, shall I speake it, or keepe it in: and why should I keepe it in, since it is truer than trueth it selfe: but it is best for me in so waigherie a matter as it is, to praye the Muses in myne ayd, whom Poetes cal vpon oftentymes for the veriest trifles they wyte. Come yee hyther therefore a little yee *Iones daughters*, whyles I proue that no man can attayne vnto that excellent Sapience, the verie castell (as they name it) of felicitie, vnles

Folle the
gyde vnto
Sapience.

The prayse of follie

les **I** Follie bee theyr guyde and leader.

Inprimis, I take it for already graunted, that all the affections of man, pertayne vnto Follie. In as much as Philosophers put this distinction betweene a wyseman, and a foole, that *the one is ledde by reason, the other by sensualitie.* And therefore doo the Stoikes seclude all affections from a wyseman, as so many dysleases of the mynde. But that notwithstanding, these affections are not onely sette in steede of pylottes too such as woulde recouer the porte of wysedome, but also in any acte of vertue, are lyke certayn pyckes, or incitations prouokpng a man to doo well. Howe euer in this point the Arche stoike Seneca strongly graunsayeth thee, who in no wise will a wyseman shoulde haue any manner affection in hym. But when hee taketh that away, hee leaueh man, no man, but rather a newefounde **G D D** without bodily sense, suche as neuer was, nor neuer shall be. Yea, to speake playnlier, hee dooth naught else than fourme a stone Image of a man, without feeling, or any manner inclination perteyning to a man in deede.

Let the Stoikes therefore (if they lyst)

E. ii.

take

The difference
betweene a
foole and a
wyseman.

The prayse of follie.

**The descrip-
tion of a wyse
man.**

take their wiseman to them selues, and make much on hym alone, or (if they thinke good) goe and dwell with hym in Platos citie, or in the lande of Farie or Vtopia. For which of you woulde not lothe, and blisse you from the company of such maner a man, as were mortified, and benumbed in all those senses and understandings, that naturally other men are ledde by? that had no affections reigntyng in him? nor woulde no more bee stirred with loue, or compassion, than if he were a flint stone? that in nothing could ouershore him selfe, but rather lyke Argus see, and cast all thinges to the vttermoſt? Forgeue no man? be onely pleased with him selfe? esteeme hym selfe onely to bee ryche? onely to be a king? only to be a freeman? brieſly, onely all thinges, but in his owne conceit onely? that cared for no friendes? friend him selfe to no man? Would not ſticke to deſie the Gods, and what ſo euer is done of other men in this preſent liſe, to laugh at it and deſpiſe it as a very madneſſe? Yet ſuche a manner quaynt beaſt is this complete wiſe man of theirs.

I pray you, if the choyle went by boyces, what citie woulde haue ſuch a gouernour? what armie ſuch a captaine? nay what wo-
man

The prayse of follie.

man woulde desire such an husbände: or who would byd such a gest to his house: or what seruant pike hym out, or continue with a maister of so monstrous conditions: On the other syde, who would not sooner prefer any one chosen euen amongst the thickest of the people: who beeing a foole, could aptly either gouerne, or obey fooles, please the mindes of such as be lyke vnto him, which is the most part, be treatable to his wife, gladly scene of his friends, merie in compaignye, and lastly, woulde thinke nothyng vnbecomming hym, that other men vse commonly to do.

But I wene ye beweepe now of this theyr wisemā, as I, for my part, was a good while agoe. Let vs passe therefore ouer to some other matter. Admitte then, some one, (as the Poets feigne by Iupiter) should out of an high place behold and see in how many miseries mans life is wrapped, how wretched and vile his byrthe is, how harde his byrnyng by, howe weake and pewlyng his childhode, how trauaylsome his youth, how heauy his age, and last, how feareful his death were.

Further, durynge al his lyfe, what bandes

Onely Folie
releueth the
miseries of
this lyfe.

of

The prayse of follie.

of sickenneses doo assaile hym, what narrow chaunces hang ouer his head, what displeasures come vpon hym, how in all thynges he fyndeth more galle than honny, besydes the iniuries which one of you scourgeth an other withall, as pouertie, enprisonment, worldely shame, rebukynge, rackynge, gyle, treason, slander, dysfession, disceit (but now *I goe about to tell the grauell of the Sea*) that for what offences men deserued suche myseries, or what **G D D** beeing their beaute Lorde, condemned them to leade their liues so persecuted and plunged in the same, yee shall pardon mee, from expressing, as not leessull for me at this present too vtter vntoo you. But who so shoulde (*I saye*) consyder all these thynges accordingly, myghte it not moue hym to approue the example and deede of the virgins of Mylefia, bee it neuer so piteous to reherse: For yee shall vnderstande, that willyngly, vppon no apparent cause why, they all hung them selues.

But sleepe we chaunce to speake of voluntarie death, I axe you, who were those, that for tediousnesse of this lyfe, dyd rather prevent Death with theyr owne handes:

Where

The prayse of follie.

Where they not such as bordered nearest by
wyledom: amongs whom (to let passe Dio-
genes, Xenocrates, Cato, Cassius, Brutus,
and suche lyke) Chiron, the wyse of Cen-
taure, hauing graunt of the goddes, to lyue
euer (so lykng him) in theire state of immor-
talitie, woulde none of it, but chose rather to
die. Wee may see therefore what inconue-
nience should ensue, if men were commonly
wise. So that we had need of a new Prome-
theus, a new world, & a new earth, to make
men of, vnles I partly through ignorance,
partly through vnreckefulnesse, not feeldom
through obliuion of pepns passed, sometime
through hope of better fortune, yea and now
and than sauouring their bittred taste with a
little hony of pleasure, did not in so manyfold
euils releue and succour them. In sorte, that
loth they are to die yet, though the fatall
spindel of their lyfe beeing runne out and ex-
pyred, Charons bote hath more than quarter
ebbe tarped for their passage hence. So that
howe lesse cause they haue, why they should
lyue, yet so much leesser is lyfe vnto them, not
that they feele any cōbrāce of the same. For it
procedeth of my goodnes I warrāt you that
cōmonly ye se old mē, of so hoze & trebling age

Old men desy-
rous to lyue
yet.

The prayse of follie.

as scant the figure of a man remayneth vnto them, being both Fumblers, Dotardes, toothlesse, grisellese, bald (or rather to describe them by Aristophanes termes) Nasticke, crookebackt, wrinkled, toothshaken, and lame of their best lymme (whiche for womanhood I name not) so desirous yet of life, and so coltish, as some one of them wyl die his white heares, & haue him selfe twice a day: an other wyl decke his balde crowne with a Peruke: an other set new teeth in his head, take perhaps out of some hogs chaps: an other fall in loue with some young pigmye, vsing more fondnesse in suche kynde of dalliance, then any young man would. For as touching such Deathes dettours, and very Grauepozers, as euen at their last cast wedde young wenches vndowed, but meeter to serue other mens turnes then theirs, that is a thing so commonly had in vse, as in a maner now it is arrected for a great prayse and charitable kindnesse vnto them.

But this is nothing, in comparison of the pleasaunt spectacle, which ye may haue at **Old women.** many of these old women, who being neuer so muche palled with long age, yea and so garcallike, as if they had lately come from **Deathes**

The prayse of follie.

Deaths Court, wil euer yet haue this pro-
uerbe in their mouthes (life is life) styl play
the wantons, and styl be tugging. Or at lest
hyre some young Phaon for meede to doo
the thing, styl daube their lither cheekes
with painting, neuer goe from the Glasse,
shew out their flaggie and pendant dugges,
prouoke their stale nature with hot reio-
citiues, syt vp at banquets, daunce Galiardes,
write loueletters. &c.

These thinges are mocked commonly,
for the greatest follies (without question)
that maye be. But yet doo these my olde
gyyles not a litle like them selues herein, ta-
king it for a singuler and onely delight, as if
they swomne vp to the chynnes in a sea of
hony, wherin who but I dooth vphold them:
And yet these deintie wise men for all their
scornefulnesse, I woulde they shoulde no
more but perpende thus with them selues,
whether it be better through suche follie to
leade a sugred life, or els standing euer vpon
narrowe poyntes of wisdomes, to seeke
(as a man woulde say) an Altar to hang
withall: For howe so euer suche foolishhe
prancks are thought to breede an euil name,
I praye you, what matter is that to my
fooles,

E.b.

fooles,

The prayse of follie.

fooles, who eyther feele not what the inconuenience of an ill report meaneth, or if they feele it, can so litle let by it, and easely passe it ouer: If a Hylstone fall vpon thy head, that is an euill in deede: but as for shame, reproche, losse of reputatiō, or euil speach, these may do thee as much hurt as thou feelest thē: that and if thou feelest them not, then are they no euils at al. *For what hurteth thee, the peoples hissing, as long as thou clappesst thy selfe on the backe:* yet who hath the grace to do so, vnlesse I Follie do arme him thereto: But now (me thinkes) I haue the philosophers once moze in my top. For that is (say they) *euē the greatest miserie of all, to be blinded so with Follie, to erre so, to be deceiued so, to be ignorant so.* Nay verilier, that is it to be a man. And yet I se not why they should call you miserable therfore, in as much as ye be bozne so, ye be ordeyned so, and made so, and such is the common destinye lotted to euery of you. For nothyng may properly be called miserable, that agreeth with the kind it commeth of, vnlesse perchaunce some would thynke a mans nature were to be lamented, because he cannot flie as birdes doe, nor goe one all foure as other beastes doo,

nor

Miserable it
is not that a-
greeth with
nature.

The prayse of follie.

nor fence hym with his hornes as bulles do:
 But then by like argument, why call they
 not a fayre hoxl ē miserable: Because he ne-
 uer learned grāmer: or eateth no rostmeat:
 or elſe a bulle unhappie, because he is not
 shapen to throwe the barre: Ergo, as an
 hoxse, who can not his grammēr, is not
 wretched, no more a man for his Follie is
 myſerable, because it agreeth ſo aptly with
 his nature.

But once agayne theſe eluiſh Sophi-
 ſters heaue at me. *The knowledge (ſay they)*
of diſciplines is peculierly giuē to mā, through
help whereof, what he lacketh by nature, he
maye ſupply with his witte and learnyng. A
 gaye matter, as who ſayth, nature which in
 gnattes, pea and in herbes, & trees, hath ſo
 diligently doone hir part, in man onely ſhould
 haue ſhewed hir ſelfe defectiue, and a nig-
 gard, wherethrough he neded to make re-
 courſe for ayde vnto diſciplines. Which diſ-
 ciplines Theutus that diſmal ſprite, who
 neuer wylled good to mankynd, dyd firſt
 fynd out for your better deſtruction ſo little a-
 uaylyng towardes ſelycitie, as rather
 they dooe hynder you from it: for which
 purpoſe they were chiefly ordeyned,

*Diſciplines
 unproſitable or
 rather hurt-
 full to man.*

The prayse of follie.

as Plato very elegantly induceth that wylse Aegyptian kyng to argue, disputyng vpon the fyrst inuention of wytyng. So therefore sciences came in fyrst, with the residue of the plagues of mans lyfe, and found out by the verie same authoꝝ, who likewise are authoꝝ of al mischiese, that is to say, by diuels: whereupon also they haue theyꝝ name grounded: for Dæmon signifieth cummyng, or a knower.

But the good simple people of the olde *golden worlde* without any disciplines at all, liued onely as Nature taught, and instincted them.

For what needed they any grāmer, when al the worlde vsed but one speche: which made also to none other purpose, saue that one myght vnderstand an other: Or whereto serued Logike, when no controuersie of woordes myght make a double meanyng: Or, what place had Rethorike, when none contēded with others: or to what effect stood Law, seeyng as yet euill maners reigned not, whereupon good lawes (no doubt) were fyrst grau ided: Further, they were more religious, & godly, then with an vngodly curiositie to ensearch the secrets of Nature, the
quan

The prayse of follie.

quantitie of the starres, theyr courses, or influences, or the hidden causes of thyngs, sup-
polsyng it against gods forbode, that they be-
yng mortall and earthly men, shoulde strug-
gle to knowe beyond theyr degrees. But he-
lesse that euer any suche madnesse came in
theyr bzaines, as once to think vpon the inqui-
rey of things set aboue the starres. But when
by little and little the purenesse of the golden
age decayed, then were sciences inuented (as
I saide) by wicked spirits, but right fewe as
yet, and practised by as few. Then after-
wards, the superstition of the Chaldees,
and idel newefanglednesse of the Grekes ad-
ded (I wene) more then six hundred others,
beyng mere vexations of mens bzaines, in
so much as Grammer alone, is able to kepe
a man to ke whiles he liueth. And yet (loe)
euen amonges such sciences, those we see
had in most price, that drawe nearest to the
common sense and Capacitie of all men,
(that is to say) to follie. For as for Diui-
nes, they may well enough walke an hun-
gred: Mathematical professors blow theyr
naples: Astronomers are laught to scorne
Sophistrers are naught set by: only a Phisi-
tion (as Homer sayth) *is more woorth then*

twentie

The prayse of follie.

every of the rest. Yea & commonly the rather, the vncunninger and lesse circumspect the undertaker of any of those vsuall sciences is, the more yet is he regarded and allowed euen amonges great men also. Lyke as Physicke, according as many now a dayes doe wiest it, is naught els then a member of Adulation, as well as Rethorick: Next place whereunto is geuen to Ciuilians and Lawyers: but I am indoubt, whether it be the second, or the fyrst, by the rules and estatutes of the vniuersitie: of whose profession as I wyll saye nothing, so other men are wont with one consent to haue it in derisyon as a certaine kynde of Asselyke philosophie: but yet these Assheades be they, that rule all the rest, and enlarge their possessions, whereas a Diuine in the meane whyle looking ouer all his bookes of diuinitie, can hardly picke him out a radish roote for his dinner, doynge battayle continually with gnattes and lyle: And therefore lyke as sciences are the more happie, and auatable, the nearer affinity they haue with follie: So are those men most happie, who altogether may abstayne from medlyng with any sciences, and folow Nature onely for theyr guide and maistris,
why

The prayse of follie.

who in no part of hir is lame, or insufficient,
as longe as it suffyseth vs to kepe our selues
within hir bandes. For Nature abhorreth
counterfeiting, and farre more towardly
dooth it flourish, that with leaste arte and
cure is tended to. For see you not how amon-
ges brute beastes, and birdes also, those liue
most wealthily, that haue least to do with dis-
ciplines: nor are subiecte to any others go-
uernment, sauing Natures: The verie Bees
(trowe yee) how happy and merueilous is
their proprietie: and yet (parby) they haue
not all their senses. What houseright by
Geometrie found euer out such maner bul-
ding, as there commes are of: What Phy-
losopher dyd euer fowme suche a common
weale as theirs is: Contrary, an horse
because he draweth nereft to mans sense, and
is conuersant amonges men, is therfore par-
taker also of suche myseries as men are sub-
iecte to. As who not seeldome, whyles hee is
ashamed to be ouer runne for the belle, dooth
tyme hym selfe, and in battaile whyles he see-
keth victorie, doth oftentimes draw his gut-
tes after him. Besides the snafles and bittes,
hee is broken with the spurres, hee is gyl-
ded, with the stables enpyllment hee is
hampred,

The prayse of follicie

hampred, with whyppes he is lashed, with the cogyls he is iauſtled, with the halters he is tyed, with the ryders he is laden: and briezely, all that tragedie of his bondage, whiche willingly in a maner he tooke vpon hym (if we geue credite to Aescopes fables) whiles (as these valiaunt men doo) his desire was to be wrecken on the Hart his enemye.

Nowe howe muche leſſer is the life of these pretty ſmall byrdes: who onely as nature pricketh them, liue from hand to mouth, in deepe quietneſſe, as long as men wyll let them alone: That and if they fortune to be taken, and made to ſing in a Cage, yet (lord) howe muche they want then of their natiue grace and properneſſe: So farre more liuely yee ſhal finde it, that rather nature induceth, then that Arte conſtreyneth. I can neuer therefore fully commend Pythagoras, who when vnder diuers bodyes and likenesſes, he had been all thinges, a Philoſopher, a Man, a woman, a kyng, a priuate perſon, a Fiſhe, an Horſe, a Frogge, pea (I weene) a Sponge alſo, iudged yet no kinde of creature more miſerable then man, becauſe all the reſt were content to lyue as nature had limited

Pythagoras
counted any
brute creature
to bee happier
than man.

The Praise of Follie.

limited them. Onely man would please to
passe his handes. Yea and therefore a-
mongst men, hee preferred also the Idyot,
and simple vulgars, beefore other learned
and reputed persons.

So Grillus (I thinke) was better aduised,
thā Vlisses, for al his depe wit, in that he had
rather grunt stil in the sty, beyng changed into
a Hog through Circes sorceries, than wayfa-
ring with him to suffer so many wretched and
greenous chaunces. In which poynt I take
it, that Homer also the father of Fables,
doeth consent with mee: that where in many
places hee calleth all mortall men both wo-
full, and wretched, and than againe speaking
of Vlisses, the example (as hee makes hym)
of a perfect wiseman, geueth him the addi-
tion of syghing, or Pensive, whiche in no
place yee fynde attributed to Paris, or Ajax,
or Achilles. But wherfore trow yee doeth he
so: Saue for that Vlisses being double, and
crafty, vled Pallas aduise in al his proceedings
and was ouerwise, as hee that tooke the far-
dest dylite he might from Natures course.

Wherefore lyke as amongst mortall men
they are fardest remoued from blissidnes,
that geue them selues to the studye of wyle-

F. h.

dom.

The Praise of Follie

bee, yea twise foolish in this, that being born men, they would possible if they could, usurp the state of the immortall Gods, and (as *Poets* feigne the *Giantes* dyd) *with their engins of sciences moue warre against Nature.*

So they one the other syde seeme least miserable, and wretched, who drawe nearest to the bluntnesse of brute beastes, and attempt nothing beyonde mans degree. For prooue whereof I wyll not blinde you with these *Stoikes Syllogismes*, but rather induce you by some famillier exāple. And by the faith ye owe to the immortal Gods, may any thinge to an indifferent consyderer be deemed more happy, and blisful, than is this kinde of men, whom commonly yee call *fooles, doltes, idiots, and patches*: by most fayre and godlye names as I take them: Peraduenture I moue a thinge without purpose, and verie fond at the fyrst sight, but ere I haue done, ye wyll graunt I haue cause to say it. See-ynge fyrst such *idiots* are free, and exempt fro all feare of death, which feare is no final corosiuie, to a minde that mindeth it I warrant you.

Lyke as they feele not what a twitchinge torment it is, to haue a grudged conscience,

and

The Praise of Follie.

and shrink as little at these oldewines tales
of sprites, of diuels, of hobgoblyne and
the faeries, neither mourning to them selues
for feare of euils, and aduersities impending,
nor bragging euermuch vppon hope of any
good luck comming.

To be bryefe, they are not tax'd, nor pluckt
a slder with a thousand thousand cares, wher-
with other men are oppressed. They blasse
at nothing, they doubt nothing, they couet no
dignitie, they enuy no mans fortune, they
loue not paramours: and lastlye if they bee
very brute Naturals, now they synne not, as
doctors doe affirme. Here, I would my
Maisters of Sapience, nay rather Maisters
of Fooles, shoulde repute with them selues,
how on all sydes theyr mindes are vexed con-
tinually. Yea let them but gather too ac-
compt, to what a number of discommodities,
inconueniences, and difficulties the state of
their life is endebted, and so they shall soone
summe vp from how many, and how great
euils I haue subtraied these my seelye pat-
ches. Who not onely them selues are euer
merry, playinge, singinge, and laugh-
inge: but also what euer they doe, are pro-
uokers of others lykewise too pleasure,

F.ii.

sport,

The Praise of Follie

spoite, and laughter, as who sayeth, ordeined
heretofore by the goddess of theyr beneuolence,
to recreate the sadnesse of mens lyues. That
whereas diuerse amongst them selues are di-
uerslye enclyned, yet doe all men with one
assent owe fauour too these pooze fooles, co-
uet the, feede them, stroke the, embrace the,
yea so much lacketh that any wight of reason
wyl do the any great iniury, as the very wilde
beastes (experience teacheth) haue bene seen
to spare and forbear from hurtinge of them,
through a certayne naturall sense of their in-
nocency.

For such Naturals are holy, and consecrate
vnto the Goddess, specialllye to mee, and not
without cause, therfore doe folke so esteeme
them. Lyke as many great Lordes there
bee, who set so much by them, as scant they
can eate there meat, or lyde a minute with-
out them, cherishing them (by gyfte) a little
better, than they are wont to doe these *from-
ming Philosophers*. A few of which sort also for
honours sake, and furniture of their courte,
they vouchsafe to entertaine. But why they
dye too make more of the other, I thinke it
soone gessed, and ought not too bee maruey-
led at. For these waywarde wysemen neuer
come

The Praise of Follie.

come forth but with admonitions, and boke lessons, yea and through confidence of their learning, are not sometime ashamed to saye the trouth: where as my fooles supplie a far more gracious and acceptable office, to delight men with their playing, dalping, sonde talke, and deuises: Yea and aboue all this, haue a proprietie, in that they onely are plaine sayers, and soothspeakers.

And what is more laudable (at least as outwardlye ye commende it) than playnnesse of speche? For although Alcibiades prouerb in Plato, ascribeth truth to children and drunkenesse, yet may all the prayse thereof bee chiefly appended to mee, as Euripides can well testifie, who wrote thus: *A foole speaketh lyke a foole* (id est) playnely. For what soeuer he hath in his thought, that sheweth he also in his countenance, and expresseth it in his talke. Whereas these wisemen are they, that are *double tongued*, as the afore sayde Euripides telleth vs, with the one of which they speake the trueth, with the other, thinges meete for the time and audience.

Their proprietie it is too chaunge blacke into white, & out of one mouth to blowe both hote

f.iii.

and

The praise of Follie.

and colde: and thinke unhappeliest in their
harts, whē they speak smootheliest with their
tongues. Howbeit mee seemeth that princes
how euer the abundant felicitie of their e-
state is wont to dase meane folkes eyes, may
yet as to this respect be counted right mys-
erable, because they want, of whom to heare
the trouth, and are sayne therefore too take
flatterers for their friends. But some wyl
say, trouth may not at all times bee spoken,
and therfore are these wisemen so eschewed,
because without respect they speake frankly.

Now so it is in deede, trueth (for the moste
part) is hateful to princes. And yet we se, that
of fooles oftimes, not onely true tales, but e-
uen open rebukes are with pleasure decla-
red: That what word comming out of a wise
mans mouth were an hanging matter, the
same yet spoken by a Foole, shal much de-
light euen him therwith. Such a liuely grace
to content men hath veryste, as long as it be
mixed with naught els that may offend. But
withhout offence too doe the same, the Gods
haue graunted to fooles onely.

And so in a manner vppon lyke causes, haue
women lyke pleasure in them, in as muche

True talke of
Foolles unpur-
nished.

as

The praise of follie.

as naturally the Feminine Sexe is bended
all to pleasure, and trifles. That what soeuer
they doe with these Fooles, although some-
tyme (may chaunce) it be past sport, yet haue
they the casse too expounded it too bee no-
thing but a playing toye, or a thing to make
dalliance, as euer women be redy witted to
tourne and excuse the matter. But now to
retourne to my purpose, my Idiotes hauyng
thus led forth their time, in much triumph,
and solace, at last without any feare or sense
of death, doe passe hence the right way too
Paradise, there also to disport their quiet and
innocent soules in continuall play. Now
go to yf ye lyst, and conferre any wiseman of
them all, with these my simple, and least re-
garded fooles, as touchinge their state of
blissfulnesse. Or rather let vs drawe on the
other side, for a comparison betwixt them, the
extract of a man of wisdome. For examples
sake, a captiue (so I may call hym) that hath
woyne out all his childehode, and youthfull
yeares in learning of disciplines, hauyng
lost so the sweetest part of his lyfe in continual
watches, cares and trauailes, nor in all the
respowes that euer tasted one dramme of
pleasure, beinge euer niggardly, euer poore,

Women belieue
in fooles.

The image of
an absolute
wiseman.

The praise of Follie.

melancholyck, and frowninge: as harde and
wrongfull to hymselfe, as insupportable and
odious to others, pale, meigre, sickelye, and
blereyde, wasted away with elde, and hore-
nesse, which his owne wilfull studie anan-
ced to him before his time: yea and before
his time postinge (as it were) out of lyfe, al-
though it skilleth not howsoone hee dyeth,
who neuer yet lyued. And this (loe) is that
goodly image of their wiseman. But once
agayne these Philosophers, or verilyet
(Soike frogges dooe croke at mee,) For
nothinge (saye they) is more miserable than
madnesse, but a notable folly is next sibbe vnto
madnes, or rather madnes it selfe. For what is
madnes els, sauing a general errorr and abu-
sion of the minde?

Tush, tush, these calues are cuer in a wronge
hope: but let vs proue yet by the Muses leaue,
how we can refell this Syllogisme of theyrs,
which (in deede) they haue subtrilly knitte to-
gether, but as in Plato, Socrates teacheth vs,
to deuide one Venus into two, and one Cupide,
into two Cupides:

So likewise these Logicians, if they had
done right, should haue deuided or distingui-
shed one kinde of madnesse for an other. In

The praise of folly.

as much as euery madnesse, is not straight
therefore miserable. For then Horace would
not haue sayde, *Is it not a sweete and plea-*
sant madnesse that deceineth mee? Nor Pla-
to likewise would haue put the raiuing of Po-
ets, Prophetes, and louers, amonges the princi-
pall weales, and benefites of this lyfe. Nor yet
the Prophetesse in Virgil would haue called
the long wandering, & peregrination of *A-*
eneas, a madde labour. But ye must vnder-
stande, that there be two kyndes of madnes. Two kyndes
of madnesse.
One is that rage, which the Furies of hell,
beyng punishers of the wicked, doo bring
with them, as often as they grasse, and fastē
in the myndes of mortall men, either feruent
desire of an vniust reuengment, or vnsati-
ate couetousnesse of Golde, or cursed and vlee-
full loue, or parent slaughter, or treason,
with such other plagues sent by the iust iudg-
ment of the Gods, for the punishmentes of
misdoers. Or when those Furies doo trou-
ble, and bere the guiltie conscience of a man,
with the pycke of dreadfull furiousnesse. But
there is an other kinde of madnesse farre vn-
lyke the former, which proceedeth from mee
wholly, and most is to be embraced. As of-
ten as a certaine pleasant raiuing, or error
of

Euery er-
rou of the
mynde is
not mad-
nesse.

Two kyndes
of madnesse.

The praise of Follie.

of the mynde, deliuereth the harte of that man, whom it possesseth, from all wonted carefulnesse, and rendzeth it diuers waies, much recreated with new delectation. Now this sayde Errour of the mynde, as a specialle iewel, and benefite of the goddess, was wished after, euen of Cicero himselfe, in a certaine Epistle he wrote to Atticus, to the end he myght haue no sense, nor understanding of so great evils, as at those dayes oppressed his countrey. Likewise Argiaius, he whom Horace writeth of, iudged not muche amysse. Who this farforth raied, that whole dayes together he would sit alone in the Theatre (a place where the common playes were played) laughyng, and clappyng his hands, and reioycing muche to hymselfe, because hym seemed verily that some excellent Tragedies were in playing there, whereas in deede he sawe nothyng at all. When yet for all that as to other respectes, he behaued hymselfe wysely ynough, beyng welbeloued of his friendes, gentill to his wyfe, and easie to his seruantes, without falling in anye rage with them, whē he found a back faulter set in his wyne vessell. Now when his kinde folkes procurement, geuing him medicines
there

The praise of folly.

Therefore, had healed his disease, and restored
 hym to his former wittes, marke ye, how he
 fell out with them, in blaming their thanke-
 lesse and double diligence. *Ye haue slaine, and*
not saued me, O my friendes (quod he) in wre-
sting my pleasure from me in this sort, and by
force herewing me suche a most delectable er-
rorr of my mynd. And well mought thou say
 it (good Argiue.) For it was they that raued
 and had more neede than thou of Elleborus
 to purge them, who tooke in hand to dryue &
 expell out of thee, so pleasant, and happie a
 madnesse, in steede of a great disease, as they
 tooke it. Howbeit, I am in doubt yet, whe-
 ther euery Errour of the mynde and senses,
 deserueth to bee called madnesse. For if one
 that is sandblynde woulde take an Ass, for
 a Hoyle, or another praise a ryme of Robin
 hoode, for as excellent a making, as Tro-
 lus of Chaucer, yet should they not straight-
 wayes be counted madde therefore. But he
 that not onely erreth in hys senses, but is de-
 ceived also in iudgement of the mynde, and
 that extraordinarily, and of custome, he (I
 say) may wel be holden mad, and out of hys
 right mynde. As if some man so often as he
 hearde an Ass rore, dyd perswade hymselfe,

Curry er.
 our is not
 madnesse.

Chaucer

The praise of folly

he heard marvellous chaunting of the Chap-
pell: or a poore caitiue boyne of beggers,
beleueed he were Crefus the riche king of
Lidia. And yet, euen this plat kynde of mad-
nesse, so it tende (as for the most part it doth)
vnto pleasure, than bringeth it no small de-
lectation, as well to them that are detepned
therewith, as those also that perceiue it to be
in others, hauing themselves no spyce ther-
of. For this manner madnesse is largelier
spred abroade, than most folke weene it is.
But in the meane while one madde mā moc-
keth another, and not seeldome you shall see
the more madman, the lowdelier laugh the
the lesse to scozne. Yet for all that, so much is
eche of them the more happie, the more di-
uers wayes hee is deceined, so in his owne
foolithe iudgement, as long as he continueth
styll in that kinde of madnesse, that is pecu-
lier to mee, which surely is so largely deu-
ded, as I doubt whether of the whole multi-
tude of mortall mā, ye can pycke me out one
onely, who at all tymes may auant himselfe
to doo wisely, and not to bee grudged wyth
some spice of madnesse. Albeit this is the
difference, that who so seeth a Goode, and
beleueth it is a woman, him noo men geue
the

the man
boyne of
madnesse.

The praise of folly.

the name of a madde man, because fewe are accustomed to erre so outtakingly.

But when wee see an husbände take hys wyfe, in whom he hath many Coparteners, to be chaster yet than euer was Penelope, much reioysyng in his good hap, but ryght happely mistaking the matter, hym nowe dooth no man call madde, because that married men are commonly disposed to such diseases.

Such after which rate doo such folkes also forae pleasantly, as preferre huntynge before all other passymes, protesting what an incredible pleasure they conceyue, so often as they here that foule musike, which a horne maketh, beyng tooted in, or the howlyng of a many of dogges. Yea I thinke the verie stench of the houndes kennell, senteth muske vnto their noses. For as touching the death of a deare, or other wyld beast, yee knowe your selues, what Ceremonies they vse about the same. Euery poore man may cut out an Oxe, or a sheepe, wheras such venison may not be dismembred but of a gentylman: who bareheaded, and set on knees, with a knife prepared properly to that vse, (for euery kynde of knife is not allowable) also

Follie of
hunters.

The praise of folly.

also with certaine iestures, cuttes a lunder
certaine partes of the wildbeast, in a certain
order very circumstantly. Which buryng,
the standers by, not speaking a worde, be-
holde it solemnly, as if it were some holy Mi-
sterie, hauing seen the lyke yet more than a
hundred times before. The (sir) whose happe
it bee to eate parte of the fleshe, marve hee
thynkes verily to bee made thereby halfe a
gentilman. So therfore whereas these hun-
ters through continuall chalyng and eatyng
of their venerie, gaine nothing, but in a ma-
ner do themselves also degenerate into wild
and savage properties, ye may see yet, howe
through this errour of myne, they repute
their liues ledde in more than princely plea-
sure. And likewise, are not they most mad-
ly, but natheles pleasantly occupied, that
wholly sette theyr studie on buylding: to
set by, and pluck downe againe, now square,
now round, now of this cast, now of that, ne-
uer makyng ende, till brought at laste
therby to extreme pouertie, they haue not so
much left them as a cotage, where to put in
their heades, nor one crosse of comforte, to
bute the head with withall. But what ther-
of? forsooth a fewe peeres haue they spent
yet

Buylvers.

The praise of folly:

yet, in great wanhope, and pleasure. *wanhope*
farre vnlike these Alcumists, or multipliers, *Multipliers*
who by their newfounde secrete science, go
about to chaunge metal into metal, searching
both by sea and by lande, a certaine Quin-
tessence. These men are so enticed by an
hope they haue to bring their feate to passe,
as neyther labour, nor cost may withdraue
them from the same, but wittily euer they
doo deuise some newe thing, wherewith to
beguyle themselves againe, till at last, ha-
uing spent all they could make, there remai-
neth not to them so much siluer, as where-
with to buye bechen coales for their soynace.
Natheles they leaue not to dreame still of
wonderous pleasant inuentions, encoura-
ging others, as much as in them lyeth, to
the saue trade of felicitie. That when at last
all hope forsaketh them, yet haue they this
prouerbe in theyr mouthes, in stede of a
great comfort and recompence, Saying, *how*
in hygh enterprises, euen the good will alone is
sufficient. And thā (loe) in their excuse, accuse
they the shortnes of mā's life, which suffiseth
not for the great waighe of so deepe a cum-
ning to be fully searched out.

Whereouer these disclayers, though I
doubt

Disclayers

The praise of folly.

doubt whether their madnesse be foolishhe, or
furiours, yet surely it is a foolishhe and ridi-
culous sight, to beholde many of them so ge-
uen to the playe, that as soone as they but
here once the sounde of the dysle springyng
vppon the boarde, (Lorde) howe by and by
their hartes begyn to leape and throbbe in
their bellies. Further, through a certaine
suckling hope of gayne, hauing made ship-
wreke of all theyr goodes, whan their shippe
strikes vppon the Dyscrocke, (a daunger
farre more perillous, than is the race of Bri-
taine) themselves hardly escappng in their
hose and their doublets, yet sooner myll they
begyle their owne brother, than hym that
wycked them of theyr money, least else per-
chaunce they might be counted foule game-
sters. Dea, and beyng olde now, and al-
most blinde, yet playe they still with glasse
eyes: and lastlye hauing their syngers so
knobbed with the goutte, as rendzeth them
impotent, yet hyze they some other to call
the Dysle for them. In which kinde of mad-
nesse (I weene) they myghte passe theyr
tymes right pleasantly, if it did not for the
most part burst into a rage, and so pertaine
rather to the Furies of hell, than to me. But
those

The prayse of Follie.

those men (no question) are wholly of my re-
 tynew, that put their sole delyte in tellyng
 or hear yng of these feigned miracles, or veri-
 ller monstrous lies, beeing neuer satisf yed
 therewith, as whan they feigne certayne ter-
 rible tales of gosses, spytes, fairies, and
 diuels, with thousand suche other old wyues
 inuentions, which the further they sounde
 from truth, are the gladlier beleued, & more
 pleasantly doo feede mens eares. For surely
 such tables are not only doulcet too passe the
 tyme withall, but gaynsful also to theyr prac-
 tises, suche as pardoners and lymittours bee.
 Than agayne next neyghbours to these, are
 such as haue a folish, but yet a pleasant per-
 swasion to the selues, that what day they see
 a woodde or a peincted Image of the gyant
 saint Christopher, no mischace shal betyde
 them. Or if they greeete the graue Image of
 sainte Barbara, with some prayer prescri-
 bed for that vse, they can not but retourne
 hurtelese from the warres. Or if vppon the
 Sondayes they worshipping S. Erasmus, with
 certayne tapers and Paternosters, their shall
 in short space become riche men. For what
 speake I of others, who with feigned Par-
 dones, and remissions of sinnes doo plea-

Inuentors of
 old wiues tales
 and fayned my-
 racles.

Parsons.

G. i.

lantly

The Praise of Folie.

sanctly flatter themselves, takyng vpon them too measure the space and continuance of soules abode in purgatorie, as it were by houre glasses, setting out, both the yerres, the monethes, the dayes, the houres, and the lest minutes, without myssing, as if they had cast it by Algrisme: O what of those, that vnder confidence of certayne Magike prayers, and charemylke Rosaryes, whiche some deuoure deuourer inuented first, eyther for his pleasure, or his profite, do promyse themselves all glad thynges, richesse, honour, pleasure, good fare, long health, longer life, grene age, yea and the next seate in heauen to God almightie, which seat yet by theyr wylles they would not possesse to tyme, I meane, that when the pleasures of this lyfe haue left them much agaynst theyr wylles, yea holding them backe as it were by the teeth, then are they at last content, to haue those heauenly ioyes succede in the others places. And here how I may bring in the foolish wanhope (imagine we) of some blither, or man of warre or corrupt iudge, who casting forth one halfe peny of all his euell gotten goodes, wyl straight thinke that the whole boorde of his former mislife, is at once forgoe.

The prayse of Follie.

forgeuen hym, and that his periuries, his
lecheries, his drunkennesses, brawlings,
deceits, trumperies, and treasons whiche
infinitely he by all his life committed, are
thereby as vpon a Quites est redeemed, yea
and so redeemed, as it may be leeffull for him,
therevpon to retorne a freshe to a newe worlde
of vices. Further, how foolishhe, nay rather
howe happie are those good soules: which
in saying dayly the seuen verses pyked
out of the whole Psalter, beleue they cannot
misle of to to great a good tourne at Gods
hands: Which verses (it is sayed) Sainct
Bernarde learned fyrst of a certayne mery
concepted diuell, yet lenger toungued, than
craftie, for the poze wretch let Sainct Ber-
nard beguyle him. But as for the verses, be-
ing in dede so bald, and nothing correspon-
dent to the braue title they beare, as wel-
nere I my selfe am ashamed of them, yet are
they allowed, not onely of the people, but also
of my great presidentes of religion.

Doreoner, sauoreth it not of the same
saue (trowpe) when euery country cha-
lengereth a seuerall saint for theyr patrone, ^{Superfluous}
assignyng further to eche saint a peculier tious worship-
sure and office, with also sundry wayes of ring of saintes
worship.

G. ii.

worship.

The Praise of Folie.

worshipping: as, this saint helpeth for the
toothache: that socowreth in Childbirth: shee
restoreth stolne goodes: an other aydeth ship-
men in tempestes: an other taketh charge of
husbandmens hogges: and so of the rest: for to
longe were it to reherse al. Than some sayntes
there be, that are generally sued to for many
thinges: amonges whom chiefly is the vir-
gin Mother of God: in whome vulgar folke
haue an especiall confidēce, yea almost more
than in hir Sonne. But what is it (I pray
you) that men make petition for vnto these
saintes: sauing for thynges pertainyng ra-
ther to follie, than ought else? Or amongs so
many peynted tables, Images of waxe, and
other offringes, wherewith all the walles,
and roofes of some pilgrimage chappels are
decked, in token of daungers escaped, sawe
yee euer any man yet escape Folie, or made
one heare the wyser? Some one (perchaunce)
was saued from drowning: an other stryken
through with a pot gone, recovered: an other,
whyles both partes were together by the eares,
no lesse happely, than manfully, fledde from the
battaile: an other, beyng hanged on the gal-
wes, through the fauour of some saint, good
maister to theenes, brake the haulter and rāne
hys

Vulgar fol-
ke pray not to
Saintes for
wisdom.

The prayse of Follie.

his waye, to the ende bee myghte once more helpe to discharge such, as are ouercharged with their moneybagges: *An other, breaking prison, escaped:* *An other in spite of the phisition waxed whole of his longe botched sicknesse:* *An other, that drank two sortes of poison at once, through the conflict of their contrarie operations, beeing dryuen into a laxe, founde them rather medicinable, than deadly, vnto hym, full sore agaynst hys wyues will, who lost both hir labour and coste about it?* *An other, whā hys carte ouerturned, brought his horses home in sauetie:* *An other, being pashed, with the fall of an house, lost not (thanks be to the saint) his life.* *An other, founde a bedde with a mans wyfe, had the grace yet to shyfte from byr hushande.*

But none of all these (I warrant you) yeldeth thanks for hys Follie layed asyde. So sweete a thyng is it, too bee cumbered with no wyledome, as men had rather be pardoned of any other thyng, than that. But howe am I entred thus farre, intoo thys Sea of superstitions? That if I had an hundred tongues, as many mouthes, and a voyce therto of yron, yet could I neuer descryue halfe the kindes of Fooles, nor racken vp

G. ij. halfe

The Praise of Folie.

halfe the names of theyr folies. So swar-
meth on all sydes the lyfe of Christen men,
with this blindnesse: which natheles priests
not ouely doe admitte gladly, but also set it
forwards, because they know well enough
on which side theyr bread is buttred.

But now, if some one of these cumberous
wise men shoulde ryle vp, and say (and say
truely) thou shalt neuer die ill, as long as thou
liuest well: Thou redeemest thy sinnes, in case
to one halspenie geuen to the pore, thou addest
repentance of thy misdades, together with
teares praier, and fastyng: and changeest all
the trade of thy lyfe: this saint wyll help thee,
if thou liuest as he did. These aduertise-
mentes, and such semblable, if this wiseman
(I say) should barke vnto the people: See
then straight from howe sweete a felicitie,
into howe greate trouble and confusion, he
should plucke backe the myndes of mortall
men.

**Funerall
pompes.**

To this colledge doe they also pertayne,
who by theyr lisedayes too seriously enact,
with what pomp and order they would bee
buried.

So farre forth as by tale also they
expresse the number of the torches, tapers,
mourners,

The prayse of Follie.

mourners, priestes, and orders of Freers, to sing at their funerals: And then, how many hyed for money, must lament and houle for them. As who saith, any manner sense of this spectacle should rebound vnto the deade. Or as if they should blushe and be ashamed, vnlesse the corpes were wooshipfully entered, with none other desire in this poynt, then if being made Maiors or Sheriffes, they should ordeine a Hydsomer light.

And truely, make I neuer so much haste, yet I can not passe ouer in silence those Pe-
cockes, which in deede are nothing different from the poorest Coblers that cloute shoone, and yet vnder a baine title of Nobilite, doe wonderously stand in their owne conceites. One of the byngs his pedigree fro Aeneas, an other fro Brutus, an other from Arthur: They shew the grauen & paynted Armes of their auncesters: they speake of their grand-
fathers, great grandfathers, belgrandfathers, and great belgrandfathers, wheras they them selues stande like blockes, in a manner lesse worth then those paynted signes, which they glory in. And yet through this sweete persuasion of Selfelikyng, they leade a golden lyfe: namely, since suche there want not,

The Praise of Folie.

as verie fooles as the other, that haue these
kynd of calues in veneration, as if they were
goddess.

Every wight
lyketh best hym
selfe.

But what speake I now of one, or two
examples: as though this Selflyking made
not most men, manyfololy, by wonderous
meanes, most happie in theyr owne opini-
on: as when one fouler than any marmoset,
thynkes hym selfe to be goodlier than Aba-
lon. Or some other, as soone as he can
draw thre lynes with a compasse, takes
hym selfe to be as good in Geometrie as e-
uer was Euclides. An other *lyke an Asse to
the harpe*, though he syng no better then a
Gynce cocke, weneth yet to be Hermoge-
nes, that excellent musitian.

Than agayne, this (no faile) is a sweete
kynd of madnesse, which we see in diuers
fooles, who what euer qualitie theyr friends,
or seruants haue, doe glorie as much there-
in, as if they could doe it them selues.

Not much vndike that wealthie richeman,
whome Senec writeth of. Who takyng
vpon hym to tel a tale, had euer his seruantes
at hand to prompt him where he missed: and
beyng him selfe so feble, as scantly he could
stand on his legges, would not feare yet by-

on

The Praise of Folie

on confidence of so many pouderbeefe lubbers, as he sedde at home, to make a matche with any man at footeball.

Furthermoze I thinke it nedelesse for me, to touch any whit these graduates of artes, and sciences: Seeing that Selfeloue is *Graduates of Artes.* altogether so much theyr alie, as any of them wyll soner be driuen from the enheritance his father left him, then geue place in cunnynge to any others, but chiefly these Synngng men, Sophisters, Rhetoricians, and poets doe excell therein, amonges whome, the vncunnynger, the moze lyketh hym selfe, and the franklier boasteth what he can doe. And lyke letuce, lyke lippes: for the balder the thing be, the moze are men wont to be in loue with it: as commonly the worste thynges are best fantasied, because (as afore I sayd) the most part of men are subiect vnto Follie. And therefore, if so be that a man the vncunnynger he is, the deper yet standeth in his owne conceite, & is of most men the moze accepted, now I se not to what entent he shoulde rather coueit the true and perfect knowledge of the thyng that he professeth, which first shoulde cost him long labour and expence before he attayne it, and being once
hau

The Praise of Folie.

The common
Self liking of
eche Nation.

had, should make him the lesse vnderstande,
the more fearefull too misse in vitting of it,
& lastly commended of a far fewer number,
because most mens rudenesse can not reache
to the finenes of the same. Moreouer, we see
how nature as in singular men, so also in eche
Nation, and almost in eche Citie, hath gra-
fed a certaine common selfliking.

And so it commes to passe, that English-
men peculiarly before all other thinges, doo
bindicate vnto them faire shape of the bodie,
Musike, and wel farsed tables. Scottes, doo
boost them selues in their nobilitie, and neer-
nesse of bloodde to their Prince, not a little
also flatterpng them selues in their Dūs do-
ctrine. Frenchmen, would be cosited ciuile,
and curteis of manners. Parisians, al other
names set asyde, desyre yet that the science of
Theologie bee peculiarly annexed to theyr
vniuersitie. Italians, aboue all men count
them selues learned in humanitie and elo-
quence, chiefly glozping in this, that amon-
ges all other nations, they bee not Barba-
rous. In which kinde of felicitie the Ro-
maines are principal, who euen yet, dreame
pleasauntly of the triumphes of their olde
Rome. Venetians, put great confidence in
their

The Praise of Folie.

their nobilitie. Grekes, as Authours of all sciences, doe magnifie them selues in so many famous men, as whylome flourished in their countrey. Turkes, and all that froth of the verie Barbarians, would be commended yet euen for theyr Religion, laughing Christen men to scoone, as rather full of superstitions. But much more sweetely are the Iewes decepued, who constantly loke yet after their Messias, and euen till this day stande obstinately by their Moyses Law. Hispaniardes, would be taken for good men of warre. Allemaignes, doo faune vppon them selues for their talnesse, and knowlage in artmagyke.

Thus, as it weere to longe to repete all, so you see (I trow) howe muche this arrogance of Selfe loue doeth deelyte all men, in all places. With whome in a maner his poster Adulation may compare.

For Selfe loue is naught else, but whan a man fauneth on hym selfe. Which if thou dooest to an other, than is it Adulation, or flatterie. But nowe a daies Flatterie (on Gods name) is taken for a vyle fault, but of such as are moued rather
with

The Praise of Folie.

Flatterie a
most requisite
and commodi-
ous thyng to
mans conuer-
sation.

with the name, thē with the thing it self: they
thinke, how faith may euyl ioyne with flatter-
rie, whiche to be otherwise, we may learne
through the example of brute beastes. For
what can be more fawning, & flattering to a
man, thē a dog: but then again, what is more
faithful: What is fuller of dalliance, then a
Squirrel: but thē again what is lesse hurtful:
vnlesse perchāce ye will say, that Lions, Ti-
gers, or Leopards are meeter for mans re-
creatiō. Howbeit there is in deede a certaine
kind of flatterie, wherby some traytors & de-
ceitful villaines do traine simple folkes oftē-
tymes to their vndoing. But this Adulation
of mine, proceedeth wholly frō a certaine gen-
tlenes, & easie whitenes, as it wer, of a frind-
ly good wyl, & draweth much nearer to a ver-
tue, thē doth her contrarpe, that is to say, A
rough playnnesse, or vnmanerly crabednesse, to
beare with no man. This adulation encoura-
geth a weake spirit, cōforteth one droopyng
in sadnes, quickneth a languishing thought,
weakeneth a dul head, raiseth by a sick mind,
mollifieth a stubbozne hart, getteth loue, and
once gotte, reteineth it styll, enticeth children
to a good wil to learne their books, gladdeth
old folks, teacheth & admonisheth princes of
their

The Praise of Folie.

their dueties, vnder colour of praise, without
offending: briefly, it maketh that ech man to
hym selfe is both deerer, & more acceptable:
whiche effect may wel be take for the chiefest
member of felicity. And what can be more sau-
nyng, then when one man prayseth an other:
like moyles clawing ech others backe: Or what
needeth me to allege vnto you, how this flat-
terie supplieth a great good portion of that
famous eloquence, greater parcel of Philick,
& greatest of Poetrie: at once, that she is euē
the very hony, & conserue of mans societie &
cōpanyng together: But philosophers say,
It is a miserable thing to be beguiled, and erre
so. Nay, most miserable is it (I say) not to
erre, & not to be deceiued. For to too are they
deceyued, who wene that mans felicitie cōsi-
steth in things self, & not rather in the opiniō
how the same are taken. *In as much as al hu-*
mane things, that is, so great darknesse and di-
uersnes, as nothing may be more clerely known
out, nor discovered: like as truely was affir-
med by my Academical Philosophers, the
lest arrogāt among al their sects. Or if that
ought may be knowen, the same yet not seek-
dome disauapleth to the gladsonnes & plea-
sure of the life. Lastly, so is mans mynd fra-
med,

Mans life de-
pendeth vpon
opinions of
thyngs.

The Praise of Follic.

med, as much more it delighteth in things to
the shew, the in such as are in deed. Wherof
who so list to haue a liuely prooffe, let hym no
more but go to a sermon, wherin if ought be
said grauely, & to the matter, he shal se strape
al the audience eyther sleepe, or gaspe, or be
yrksome. But & if the skreker (the preacher I
wold haue sayd) falleth out of his purpose, as
cōmonly their vslage is, into some tale of ge-
sta Romanorū, or such like, the by & by they
lyft by theyr heads, they stand vp, and geue
good eare. Also if any saint among other, se-
meth rather to be newfound, or poetical, ad-
mit it be S. Braddon, S. Christopher, or S.
Barbara, the same yet shal yee see more de-
uoutly worshipped. & bowed to of the peple,
then Peter, or Paul, yea or Chyriste hym
self. But these matters pertayne not to this
place. Consider you therefore, howe much
lesse costeth the acquirie of this felicitie,
which dependeth on the semblance and opi-
nion of a thing, as if it were had, then that
other of the thing selfe, being had in deede,
which be it of neuer so smal value and esti-
mation, as Grammer, yet you see howe long
a man must sweate, ere he geat it, whereas
the semblance of the same yee may easily
conceiue,

The Praise of Folie.

conceiue and come by, through your owne
perswasion: and yet shall that conceyte as
much, or more, anayle you towards self
ruine.

If or admit that one eateth stinking Sale-
fish, wherof some other could scant byde the
smell, and yet to his mouth it tasteth sweeter
then a Partrich: Nowe (I pray you) what
difference is there, as touchyng the felicitie
he taketh therein? Or an other abhored
to eat of a Carpe, or some other delicate
kynde of Fishe, byd that any thyng hynder
the blissful state of his lyfe? If a man hath a
wyfe as bgly as may be, who yet in his con-
cept, may compare in beautie with Venus,
is it not now al one vnto hym, as if she were
fayre in deede? If he that beholdeth a table
daubed with a litle durt and redde Okre, did
perswade hym selfe it were a peece of Apel-
les or Hās Holbyns painting, is he not hap-
pyer (trow ye) then some other, who at great
pryce haue bought some of those woorkmē's
woorks, & peraduenture take lesse pleasure
in regarding of the same, thā he dooth of his?
I know a gentelman, that presented hys new
wedde d wife with certaine contersept stones
set in rings, perswading hir (as he could do it
finely

The Praise of Follie.

finely enough) that not only they were true,
& orient, but also of great value. Now I pray
you, what I killed that to hit? Seeing the con-
tented both his eyes & fantasy with those con-
terfeites, keeping them for a great treasure,
whereas the husband in the meane season both
spared cost, & toke pleasure at his wyes er-
ror, who nacheles cōned him as great thā,
as if they had been right iewels. Is there any
difference (trow ye) betweene suche as Plato
feigneth sitting in a caue vnder the ground, to
see nothing but shadowes & representations of
thinges, so that they doo conceit naught els, and
comēt them selues therewith, and that wisemā,
he imagineth should come out of the caue, and
so see very things as they are in deede? That &
if Micillus in Lucians Dialogues had euer-
more dreamed that his goldē & riche dream,
thā neded he not to haue wished for any other
felicitie. Conclude therfore, that no differēce
is betweene a thing it selfe, & the opinion or
semblaunce of the same: or if there be, thā are
my fooles yet in the happier trade. First be-
cause their felicitie costeth them as little as
can bee, as onely an easy perswasion and be-
leeve that they haue, or can doo a thing.
Nerte thā, for that they enioie their felicitie

The praise of follic.

in common with many others, and pardie
ye knowe, howe vnpleasant the possession of
any weale is, without felowship, as if a man
dwelled without company in the fatrest plat
of the whole earth. Wherunto I may lyken
these wisemen. For who is he that knoweth
not howe scarre they are to finde, in case ye
finde any at all? In dedde the Greekes in so
many hundred yeeres coulde picke out but
seuen of them: and yet if ye liste those well,
I reny my selfe, and ye finde one halfe, yea or
the thyrde parte of of a wiseman amonges
them all. Therefore, if amonges many com-
modities which my cosyn Bacchus doth en-
due you with, this (& worthily) is reputed the
chiefest, *that through drunkennesse he wyperh
all cares and anxieties from the mynde, but
for a season onely, (for as soone as one hath
slept a while bypon his drinke, and tempred
so hys braynes, than retorne in post hast hys
former troubles and vexations.)* How farre
more ample, and readie than is my benefite
of Follie vnto you: when through a conti-
nuall drunkennesse (as it were) I replenishe
your minds, w much ioy, delight, & pleasure
yea & that so easily brought about: Which
benefite of mine I doo distribute to all men,
wheras

Dunken-
nesse.

Follie a con-
tinuall drun-
kennesse.

Thi.

wheras

The praise of follie.

wheras other Gods giftes are deriued sund-
derly vpon sundry men. Pardie, these noble
and fine wyues that are able to resolute sad-
nesse, & make men pluck vp their stomacks,
doo not growe in euerie place. Fewe haue
the gyfte of beautie through Venus fauour.
Fewer haue eloquence at Mercuries han-
des. Hercules maketh not all men ryche,
Iupiter graunteth not kingdomes to euerie
body. Ostentymes Mars sauoureth neither
partie. Many retorne discomforted from
Apollos Oracle. Not seeldome Ioues thun-
der destroyeth men: and Phebus launceth
his arrowes of plague amonges you, Nep-
tunus drowneth moze folkes than he saueth,
(for what should I speake of these Veious,
Plutones, Ates, Peynes, Feuers, and
such other, not goddes, but rather helhounds
and tormentours vnto you.) But I Follie
am she, that egally doo comprehend all men
vnder the compasse of my so great a good
gift. And looke not yet to be praide vnto, nor
am not angrie, nor seeke amends, when any
part of my sacrifice is misdone, or ouerslip-
ped. Nor I mingle not heauen & earth toge-
ther, if any one by doing the other gods to a
sacrifice banquet, leaueth me onely bebynd, &
alloweth

Follies power
embraceth all
men.

The praise of follie.

alloweth mee not my portion of the smoke,
and sauour of the burnt offerings. For of the
other Gods in this poynt such is the most
tie and ceremoniousnesse, as in a maner it is
easier, yea & lesse peril for a man to let them
alone, than to medle with their rites, and ob-
seruances. Lyke as some men there be, so
wayward of nature, and so testine, as better
it were not to vse their companie, than to
claime any acquaintance of them. But no man
(saye they) maketh sacrifice vnto follie, nor
buildeth hir a temple. Now surely I maruaile
not a little, (as afore I said) at such ingrati-
tude of men. But yet of my gentillesse I
take this also in good part. Albeit to say the
truth I fynde no want thereof at all. For
why should I requyre, either frankensence, or
lained meale, or a goate, or a hogge for my
sacrifice? Whereas all mortall men, in euerie
region, do yelde me that worshipping, which
euen by these scripture doctours is wont to
be most approued: Unlesse perchance I
should enuye Diana, because hir altars are
besprent with mans blood. Nay, I think my
selfe to bee then most anuply, and religiously
woorshipped, when euerie where, all men
beare mee. (as they doo) in theyr hartes,

H. ii.

expresse

The praise of follie.

How men
woorship
Follie.

All the world
a temple to
Follie.

Graven and
paynted ima-
ges.

expresse mee in their maners, and represent
me in their living. Which kinde of worship-
ping is not very rife, no not amonges Chri-
stians. For what a number of them see wee,
to set tapers afoze the virgin mother of god:
and that at noone daies when least neede is:
But then againe, how few of them go about
to follow hir steppes eyther in chastnesse of
life, sobernes of maners, or loue of heauenly
things: For so should sainctes most digne-
ly be woorthipped. Moreouer, why shoulde
I fynde lacke of a temple, seeing all thys
world is in maner of a temple most goodly
(as I take it) vnto mee: And as for priestes
of my lawe, and other ministers of my re-
ligion, I am sure I want none in any place,
whereas men want not. Than, I am not
altogether so foolish, to demaunde any gra-
uen or peynted images representing mee,
which rather shoulde derogare than aduance
myne honour. Whereas oftentimes I see
many doltes, & fatteheades worshippe such
stockes, in steede of the sainctes themselues,
wherby I might chance to be serued, as they
that are thrust out of their roomes, by theyr
deputies. But I take it, that so many ima-
ges are erected in my name, as there bee ly-
uing

The praise of follie

uing men, bearing the liuely representation
and image of me about them, will they, or will
they not. Wherefore, I haue no cause to be a-
greeued with the other Gods, though they
be worshipped sunderly, in sundry partes of
the earth: and that at times of the yeere pre-
fixed. As Phebus in the Isle of Rhodes,
Venus in Cypres, Iuno at Argos, Minerua
at Athenes, Iupiter in Olympus, Neptu-
nus at Tarentum: and Priapus at Lamp-
sacum, Whereas all the worlde vniuersally
offereth mee day by day farre dearer, and
more digne sacrifices, than theirs are. That
and if I seeme to some folkes, to haue spoken
these wordes more stoutly, than truely, go to,
let vs but view a little, and consider the very
lyues, and dooynges of men, and so it shall
manifestly appeare, how much they are en-
debted vnto me, and how much I am made
of, both of high and lowe degrees. Yet I en-
tend not to accompt euery mans lyfe, for
that were an endlesse labour, but a certaine
onely of the most notable; whereby ye may
easily gesse, what the rest are. For what
needde I to alledge vulgar people: who al-
together (without any question) appertaine
to my bande?

p.iii.

So

The praise of follie.

The common
life of men
full of follie.

How the gods
out of heauen
behold mens
follies in earth.

So many beines of Follie they abounde in, and so many newe myndes they do freshe and freshe seeke out, as a thousande suche as Democritus was, shuld not suffice to laugh at them, although yet those verpe laughers had neede of another Democritus to laugh them also to scozne. Yea, and it passeth, to see what sporte and passetyme the Goddess themselves haue, at such Follie of these selie mortall men. For as for the forenoone, and sober houres of the daye, those the Gods spende in counsaile matters, and hearing of mennes bowes, and supplications. But after dynner once, when they haue drunken merily of theyr Nectar, and list not to treate on earnestt affayres, than which syde of heauen bendeth most towardes the earth, there sitte they, and intenciuely behold what mortall men doo: and surely no spectacle can be more pleasaunt vnto them. Good Lorde, what a Theatre is this worlde: how many and diuers are the pageants that fooles play therein: For I also not seldome am wont to sitte amongst the Gods to marke mens dooings. One man see they readie to die for loue of a womā, & the lesse he is beloued, the more hotly to pursue hir. Another marieth the goods,

The praise of follie.

goods, not the wydow. He lettes his wyfe to sale. Another ielous wretch lyke Argus, keepeth his in mewe.

This man mourneth, and Lorde, what follies sayth he, and dooth hee, hyrnyng also some players(as it were) to weepe & howle for the nones. Another, whatsoeuer he can rape and rende, slingeth it into hys belly gutte, when not long after hee would gladly skamble for a peece of bikkette. Another putteth all his delyght in sleepe, and slouth. There be some such also, as buslie themselves busily in other mens businesse, not lookyng once howe theyr owne goeth. Some compe themselves ryche men, in borrowing of *Peter to clothe Paule*, when soone after they fynde not one farthyng left, wherewith to blisse them. Another thynkes nothing better than lyuing hymselfe wretchedly, to make John hys sonne ryche. This man for a little lucre, and that also incertaine, skymmeth all the seas, committing hys lyfe to the waues and the wynds, which no money may restore to hym, once beeyng forlorne. Hee had rather seeke hym ryches in the warres, then sleepe in a whole skynne at home.

¶.iiii.

There

The praise of follie.

There bee some, that in plying, and getting attendaunce on olde men childzenlesse, weene to become riche through executourship. Such want not also, that in wooing of these wealthy olde trottes, thinke to speed sooner of their purpose. Either of which then surely make most pastyme to the Goddes they beholders, when of those that they go about to traine, they also are trained, and baited with craft for craft.

Usurers.

But aboue all others, vsurers are a kinde of men most foolish and filthy, whose trade and occupation being in deede the vilest that can bee, and thereto handled by them after as byle a maner, with lying, forswearing, byying, beguiling, and shifting, yet compt they themselues to bee head men of theyr parishes, because they weare hoopes, and goldrings on their fingers. And no marueile when these blinde minions, these fryers, can so fauningly bpholde them in their sermons to the people, calling them worshipfull, and venerande maisters, in hope that some portion of those euill gotte goods, may somewhat in compensation of their golden glossing, fall vnto their couent.

You shal see againe some others so much
geuen

The praise of folly.

Genen to Pithygoras sect, (who would haue all things amongst friendes to bee in common) that what soeuer they synde lyinge at large, with as free a conscience they will take it, as if it came to them by inherptaunce. There be some also, who onely with wishinge and moulding are riche in their owne fantasie, as whan they imagine certaine sweete dreames of glad thinges too befall them, which they take sufficient for their whole felicitie.

Many reioyce too bee holden richmen abroad, liuyng at home with an Ozenge, or an Dynion.

This skapethriste, throweth his goodes against the walles. That pennie father, scrapeth it together, both by God, and by the diuell, He, is driuen through ambypcion, too seeke fauour at hym, and hym. Hee is no medlar, but syts by his owne fyre at home. Many fooles, tangle them selues in the law, and canne neuer gette out of it, but holde and shoue on both sydes, onely to make fatte these adiourning iudges, and Ambidexter Advocates.

This man looketh for a new world. That man compasseth some deepe drifte in his head, . . . Some one hath an especiall de-

H.v.

uotion

The praise of Folly,

denotion to goe to Hierusalem, to Rome, or to S. James in Galice, leaupng his wyfe and childezen succourlesse in the meane while at home.

Briefly, if one (as Menippus dyd) lookynge out of the moone, behelde from thence the innumerable tumults, & busynesses of mortall men, he shoulde thinke verely he saw a many of flues, or gnatts, brawlyng, fighting, beguiling, robbing, playing, liuing wantonly, borne, bredde vp, decaying, and dyng: So that it is scant beleueable, what commotions, and what Tragedies, are sterred vp, by so litle, and so shorct liued a vermin as this man is. For somtymes a small stoyne of war, or pestilence, swoyeth away and dispatcheth many thousand of the together. but I were plainly most foole of al, & woechy whō *Democritus* with many laughers shoulde point to scozn., if I tooke vpo me to tell bype all the sortes of bulgar peoples Folly and madnesse: & rather not tourne me to those, who amongst you, haue a certayne reputation of wysedome. Such as compasse no meane thinges, but aspire euer too a certayne preminence in knowledge and cunnyng aboue others.

Amongst

The praise of folly.

Amongst whom Gramarians and schoole-maisters seeme to bee right notable. A kinde of men (doubtlesse) most miserable, most flauelyke, and most contemptuous, vnlesse I dyd mitigate and releue the discommodities of theyr most wretched profession, with a certaine sweete baite of madnesse. For surely these Grammer teachers are not pestered with one or two euils, but rather with centum grauamina. As who euer in their Schooles, theyr schooles sayde I: naye rather in theyr Chapter houses, Session places or Butcheries, beinge alwayes bare, hungrye, and slouenly, doe wast themselves away with continuall traueiles amongst a many of boyes, ware deasse with noyse and crying, kyll them selues with stench and fylthynes. And yet through my benefyte, they count no men lyke them selues.

So Lordlye a thinge they take it, when they feare their fearefull flock, with a threathing voyce and countenaunce. So Princely an execution, to teare the poore boyes arses with rods, and ferules, playing the tourmentours, and termagants amongst them much lyke the Ass wrapped in a Lyons skynne. But yet, whyles they are thus occupied, that
theyr

The praise of Folly,

their fylthinesse seemeth more then cleannesse
vnto them, that stencche, and fyllyng, smelleth
ambze grise, that bondage of bondages is
taken by them for a kingdome: So far forth
as they woulde not chaunge their tirannishe
estate, neyther with Phalaris nor Dionysius.
But farre more blisfull yet bee they, thzough
a certaine conceipt they haue taken of a new
trade in teaching, eche therein folowing his
owne deuise.

That wheras they put into childzens heads,
naught but mere trifles, and fond rules of
their owne, yet (Lorde) what Palæmon, or
what Donatè wyll not they dispise, in re-
gard of them selues: But (thanked bee
GDD) they fynde the meanes yet, by what
crafte I cannot tell, to make the foolish mo-
thers, and ignoraunt fathers beleue, that
they are such in dede, as they boast themselues
to be.

Adde also hereunto, this kinde of delight
they haue, as often as any of them chaunceth
in some olde Booke to fynde out the name of
Anchises mother, or some other Latine word
not commonly vsed, as Bubsequa, Bouina-
tor, Manticulator, or diggeth by some gob-
bet of an olde Stone grauen with Romaine or

Gre:

The prayse of folly.

Greeke Letters somewhat defaced, (Lorde)
than what exultation, what triumphes, what
commendations make they of it: as if they
had wonne all Afrike, or taken the great citie
of Babilon.

What thinke you also, when they sette bype
and shew abroad their verses: verses (God
knoweth) most bald, and foolish, but neuer the
more faile they of soe as very alles as they,
will highly comende the same: which putteth
them in such a flash, as playnely they beleue
they haue recovered Virgils owne wayne in
Poetrye. But this is the sweetest poynt of
all, to see them flatter, and prayse eche other,
clawing them selues by courses. That and if
(as is possible ynough) it chaunceth one of
them to stumble at some worde, and another
being more aduised than he to take him with
the maner, (Oh Hercules) what Tragedies,
what disputations, what Inuectiues are tosse
d than and retossed betwixt them: Let ne-
uer grammarian bee my friende, if I lye
ought herein.

I knowe a certaine learned man, beinge
both a Grecian, and a Latinist, a Geome-
trician, a Philosopher, and a Phisition, yea
a Kinges Phisition, nowe almost fortye
yeres

The prayse of folly

peres old, who setting all other things apart,
hath whole xx. yeres together, gone about the
making of a new Grāmer: esteeming him self
right happy, if he may yet liue so long, as to
set a perfect rule and distinction betweene
the eight partes of speache, which hytherto
none of the Greek or Latine grammarians
coude fully bring to passe: As who sayeth, it
were deadly sinne, if one make a Coniuncti-
on a distinction pertayning to the nature of
Aduerbes. And for this cause, though alredy
there be as many Grammers, as Grammer-
teachers, nay moe, for my freind Aldus alone
hath moze thē fīue times set out a Grammer,
yet ouer slippeth he no Grammer Booke,
be it neuer so tedious, and barbarously writ-
ten, which hee looketh not euer, and search-
eth througħly, enuying any man that in this
kynde should goe one ace beyonde hym, as
if he feared least some other might take the
glozy hereof from him, and his twenty yeres
labours should be spent in bayne.

Now whether call you this a madnesse, or a
Folly?

If as to mee it skilleth not,
so pee confesse it to proceede all of my good-
nesse, that these poore wightes, these Gram-
marians,

The prayse of folly.

marians, and Schoolemaisters, who els
shoulde bee as wretched as wretchednesse it
selfe, weene yet they are mounted into such
a felicity, as gladly they would not chaunge
lines, nor estates, no not with the rich Kings
of Persia.

Poets are somewhat lesse beholding vnto
mee, notwithstanding, euen by theyr profes-
sion they shew themselues to be of my sect, a
free kynde of men, that lyke paynters may
feigne what they list, whose studye tenderh
naught els, than to feede Fooles eares with
meere trifles and foolish fables. And yet
it is a wonderous thing to see, how through
fame thereof, they weene to be made immor-
tall, and Gods peeres, promisinge others al-
so lyke immortalytie thereby.

To this order more then to any other, both
Selfeloue and Adulation are annexed fami-
liarly, and of no kinde of men 'am I obser-
ued more playnely, nor more constantlye.
Moreouer Oratours, and Rhetoritians,
notwithstanding that a litle they seeme too
swarue from mee, cleauing to the Philoso-
phers, yet I can proue them also to be of my
factiō, as wel by other argumētts, as by this
that in the preceptes of their arte, amongst
diuers

The prayse of folly

diuers other trifles, they haue written so largely and exactly, *how to prouoke laughter in an audience, and of the cost, or meanes of scoffing*: So farfoorth as he what soeuer hee was, that wrote the Booke of Rhetorike to Herennius, maketh folly also to be a member and parcell of Rhetorick. And Quintilian, the very headman of this order, in his booke of the institution of an Oratour, hath made one chapter all of laughter stirring, senger I weene than is Homers Iliade, yea so muche doe Rhetoricians attribute too foolishnesse, as oftentimes what obiection by no argumentes may bee refelled, the same yet with some laughing and some scoffing conceites, they woulde haue shifted of. Unlesse perchance yee will say, that folly hath naught to doe therein, when with suche tauntes and mery tourned aunswers, they prouoke men to laughter, yea and that by rules and precepts genen therof for the nonce.

Of this grape are suche also as in makynge and publishyng of new bookes, do fysh for a prayse and glory. These men as generally they are much bounden vnto mee, so in expectall are suche of them, as doe blotte theyr Papers with meerest trifles.

The praise of follic

For as for those that take vpon them to write cunningly to the iudgement of a few, and care not what learned men looke vpon their doynge, then take I to be rather miserable, than blisful, segyng how continually they are sayne to twich their wits in and out, in putting too, in chaunginge, in blotting out, in laying their worke asyde, in oueruewinge it agayne, in shewing it to some for a prooffe, and yet keepinge it in their handes whole nyne yeares together, so that they are neuer satisfied with themselves, whiles they goe about too purchase so vayne a rewarde as prayse is, yea that geuen them by a few, onely so dearely bought with many nights labours, and losse of sleepe the sweetest thinge that can bee, and with so many travels, and beating of their braynes about it: besydes the hurt they susteine in their bodies, decay of beautie, marryng of their eyesyght, or also blindness, together with pouertie, enuy, forbearng of pleasures, vntimely age, hasted death, and such lyke disadvantages, whiche natheles these wissemen stick not at, so they may haue their writings allowed at one or two of these blergyde bookwormes hands.

I.i.

But

The praise of Follie.

But my Scribes on the other syde, haue not a litle more commoditie and pleasure of their folly. Whereas takyng no great leasure in penning of theyr matter, nay rather what so ener toye lighteth in theyr head, or falleth in theyr thought, be it but their dreame, they do put the same straight in writing, with small dispence or none, sauing wast of paper: knowing (I warrant you) what will come of it, that the soder the trifles bee, which they in-terreat of, the more commendation shall they get of most men, fooles as they, & vnlearned. And what may strie is it for them to set light store by two or thre of those learned mens repproues, if so be yet they reade theyr works? Or what auayleth them, so fewe wisemens allowance: where so great a multytude of fooles on the other side wil disallow it. That in case they haue the feate to sette forth other mens doinges for their owne, and can be contented too beare the name of that, which others tooke the paynes about, mary sye than I thinke I haue good skill: for though it chaunce them at last to bee taken with the manner, yet for a season they may kepe their reputation.

And

The praise of follie.

And it is a pleasure to marke how much these men esteeme them selues, whan they are praysed so of the people, and whan they are poputed out in a great compaign, as this is the woderous fellow ye heare of: and when in euery Bookebinders shop their woorkes are set to the sale, and when they read their names, surnames, and bynames, set in the first fruntes of euery booke, which titles also they doe counterfeite, and tourne into some contrary language, as straunge as may be deuised.

Yet, I pray you, whan all is done, what bee they els but names: and how few shal know those names, hauing regarde to the wordes widenesse: and how many lesse commende them: namely such diuersitie being in iudgements: yea amongst vnlearned men also: But what say you to this, that not seeldome they feigne those names, or borrow the out of olde Authors: for one of them togeth too bee named Telemachus, an other Stelenus, or Laertes, he Policrates, bee Thrasimachus, and such lyke. So that now it skilleth not how they entitle their boks, for as by as good reason might they cal it a goord, or a radishe roote, or name it A. or B. as philosophers do by theirs.

¶ ii.

But

The praise of Follie.

But this is the best sport of all, too see them
present eche other with *epistles, with verses,*
and with matters of prayse, sent from fooles,
to fooles, and from Alles, to Alles. Where
he in his iudgement is as good a Poete as
Alcaus was, and him doth he lykewise com-
pare to Calimachus. The one is holden for
more eloquent than Tullius Cicero, that o-
ther, for better learned then Plato. Yea and
not seeldome leauinge this fayre playe, they
fall to foule, in seeking the out some aduersa-
ries, to the ende that in contending together,
they fame may the wider be blowne abroad.
In the meane time, one learned man taketh
his parte, an other taketh his, till at last both
the Captaines hauing buckled manfully to-
gether, would bee taken for Victours, and
both partes pretend too Triumph therefore.
These thinges of wisemen are counted too
bee meere folies, as in deede they are, who
can denie it: But yet therewhile through my
benisyt they leade a pleasant and glorryous
lyfe, as not wyllynge to chaunge they Tri-
umphes, skareely (I beleue) with those of
the Scipions.
Howbeit, such as are learned in deede, are
not

The Praise of Follie.

not a litle also beholding vnto mee, whiles
with great pleasure they may laugh at the
other, and take fruition of their madnesse,
which they cannot gaynsay, vnlesse they bee
to vnkinde, and the verpest choyses of all.

Next these now, Ciuilians and Canonistes
challenge no meane place amongst learned
mē. And who the they, stand deeper in Self-
lykinge? For whiles continually they turne
and returne Sisiphus stone in rehearling by
an hundred Lawes and Paragraphes al with
a breath, it skilleth not how litle to purpose,
and whiles they adde glose vpon glose, and o-
pinions, vpon opinions, thei make as though
their Law science were most hard, and diffi-
cult to be attained too. So what soeuer is
hardly done, that they reckon straight to bee
most excellent.

And ioyne we (hardly) to them these Sophi-
sters and Logicians, bringe a race of men
more kackling then a many of dawes: eche
of whom in babling may compare with ten
women chosen for the nonce, and farre more
happye shoulde bee, in case they were onely
bablers and not skoldes also: in soe that of-
tentimes for the Moone shine in the wa-
ter, they strue whole dayes together, and
with

The Praise of Follie

Philosophers.

with too much arguynge, let the trueth of the matter slippe by them. Matchlesse though Selfelyking they are bathed all in felycitie, so that armed onely with three Syllogismes, thei dare boldli prouok an mā, as wel assured that they wil neuer geue ouer, though Stetor himself were matched against the. Next the come these Philosophers, venerable for their long beardes, and clokes downe to the feete, protestinge them selues onely to haue knowledg and wisdome, wheras other men stande for no more then Ciphres in Algorisme.

But (lord) how sweetly do they raue in their owne opinion: when constantly they affirme there be worlde innumerable: Or when they take vppon them to measure the sunne, the Moone, the Planets and their compasses, as it were by ynche-meale, or drawne with a line: Or when they expounde the causes of thunder, of Windes, of Eclipses, and such other inexplicable thinges, nothinge doubtinge, as if they had crept into natures bosome, or were of counsaile with the Gods.

And yet doth Nature laudelye laugh them

The Praise of Follie,

to scoyne, with all theyr coniectures: coniectures I saye, and no certayne knowledge, which appeareth by this, that one sect of them agreeeth not with an other, but rather contendeth together vpon euery litle thinge.

And yet these, who in deede knowe nothing, will take vpon them to know all thing. Yea whereas they know not themselves, nor see not oftentimes a pitte, or a stone lying in their way, either for poore blindnesse, or because their wit is not at home, yet make they their auant to see and perceiue playnly their Idees, their vniuersals, formes seperate, first matters, quiddities, and Eccites thinges so subtile, and so fyne, as not Lynceus himselfe coulde espie them out, though it be sayde how he coulde see through a stone wall.

But then chiefely doe these Philosophers disdaine other bulgar people, as often as with triquetre, and tetragon circles, or with suche lyke Mathematicall figures, drawne one vpon an other, and entangled in maner of a mase, with letters also sette as it were in order of battayle, and with lynes drawne hither and thither, they doe caste a mist before simple folkes eyes.

The Praise of Follie

And such there want not also of this kynde of men, that take vpon them by lookynge on the Starres and Planets, to tell vs aforehand, what shall happen and betide a hundred yerres after. Declaring by theyr Prognostications, the successe of certeine wondrous accidents, straunger then any witchcraft, or arte magike. Yet such is their hap, to fynde out men, who of theyr synguler grolnes geue credence also to this their so plaine illusion. Now hauing recited thus far, and comen to the place of Doctors of Diuinitie, I stande in doubt whether I may speake of them, or rather passe them ouer, and not sturre at all theyr patience, beinge a nest of men so crabbed and wasplyke, lest els perchauce they shoud all at once fall vpon me with syx hundred Conclusions, dzyuing me to recant, that in case I refused so to doe, then woulde they by and by denounce mee for an heretick. For that is the thunderbolte, wherewithall they threaten such, as stand not best in theyr fauour.

But surely although none other sort of men doe with lesse goodwyll then these acknowledge my goodnesse vnto them: Yet canne I proue these Doctors also too bee more than
one

The praise of folly.

one or two wayes in my daunger, beyng so
popped vp with their owne Arrogance and
Selfeliking, as if they dwelled amongst the
starres, or looked downe from aloft, & in a
manner tooke compassion vppon other seely
men like wormes creeping by the grounde.
Namely, whiles they are hedged in on all
sides, with such a garb of Magistral defini-
tions, conclusions, corallaries, explicite &
implicite propositions, with so many star-
ting holes, as not Vulcanes nettes were a-
ble so fastly to holde them, but they woulde
winde themselves out againe with Distin-
ctions, wherewith they carue al knottes a
sunder, as smothely as a rasour dooth the
heares of a mans beard. Such a number
of newfounde monstrous termes haue they
thicke and threefolde inuented. Also whyles
they expound the secrets of scripture at their
pleasure, disputing how the worlde was first
created, & proportioned, by what chanelis sin
was deriued into Adams posteritie, what
wayes, by what measure, & in how short space
Christ was cōplete in the wombe of Mary the
virgin: And how in the sacrament of the al-
tar, the accidents of bread & wine, remayne
whē the substance is gone: but these questions

The factis
questions of
schole doc-
tours.

I. b.

are

The praise of folly.

are for euerye young beginner. Other haue they more meete for great & illuminate doctors, which if at any time in disputations or talking after dinner they do stumble vppon, straight they shake of their sleepe nodding, & doo rowse themselves. As whether any instant was in the generation of god the second person? whether in Christ there be more filiations thā one? whether this proposition be possible? God the father, hateth the sonne, or whether Christ might possibly haue taken to hym the likenes of a womā, of a feend, of an asse, or of a goorde? Or how that goord should haue preached, done miracles, or ben hanged on the crosse? Or what shoulde Peter haue consecrated, if hee had consecrated, what time Christes bodye hunge on the Crosse? Or whether Christ being transformed so into a goorde, might at the same time be called man also? Or whether after the resurrection it be lawfull for mē to eate or drinke? as who saith, prouiding for hūger & thirst afozehand. Innumerable such fine toyes haue they, muche more subtil thā these, of Instātes, formalities, quiddities & Ecceities, which no mā I beleue could espie out, vnlesse he were so clere eyed, as to see out in a deepe darknes those things
that

The praise of folly.

that bee no where. I may adde also here to
their sentences or sawes, which are so estrange
& beyond al expectatiō, as the very Stoikes
sentences called Paradoxes, being cōpared
to theirs, seeme grosse, & more than vulgar.
(For example) Lesse sin is it, (say they) to steale
a thousand mē, thā once on a Sunday to clout
a poore māns shoe. Or rather should we let al the
world go to wreke both with dogge & cat (as
they say) thā once to make a lesing, be the mat-
ter neuer so light. Now again, these their sub-
til subtilties, doo they make yet more subtil,
through so many sortes of Scholemē as they
haue. So that easier you shal finde it to wynd
out of a mase, thē out of their intricat names
of Reales, Nominales, Thomistes, Alber-
tists, Occanistes & Dunsme, yet these be not
all, but the principal only. But turne you to
which sect of thē ye wil, & ye shal prooue the
same to be so cunning, so difficult, & so full of
high Misteries, as I weene the Apostles thē
selues had neede to be instructed by a newe
spirit, in case bypon these matters they were
cōpelled to argue with this new kind of doc-
tors. Paul could expresse what faith was: yet
whā he said thus, *faith is the substance of thin-
ges to be hoped after, & an euidence of things
not yet appearing.*

The sectes
of schole
doctours.

This

The praile of folly.

This Definition (say they) was not Magistraliter (id est) Doctourlike sette forth by him. And as Paule could very well teache what was Charitie, so did he not yet (saye they) halfe like a Logician either define, or deuide the same, in the first Epistle, and .xiii. chapter to the Corinthians. The Apostles likewise did holily & deuoutly penough consecrate the sacrament of Christes body: and yet, who so had apposed them in terminus à quo, and terminus ad quem, or in transubstanciation, or by what meanes the selfe same body of God may be in diuers places at once? or of the differēce they put now between Christs body as it is in heaue, as it was on the crosse, & in the sacrament of the altar: Or at what instant the transubstanciatio is made, seeing the prayer, by vertue whereof it is made, is euer passing ouer as it is in saying? These quaint questions (weene I) the Apostles woulde neuer haue soluted with like quicenes of engin, as our Dunsmen doo both argue, & define vpon the same. The Apostles knew the virgin mother of Iesus: but which of them did euer expound so clerckly, how she was preserved from Originall sinne, as our Doctours do? Peter receiued heauen keyes: yea
receiued

The praise of folly.

recolued he at his haads (say they) that would
neuer haue committed the same to one. *wince*
thy them. Now whether he knew so much or
no, I cannot tell: but this I am sure of, that
he neuer touched this narrow point, howe it
commeth to passe, that he also may haue the
keie of science, who hath no science at all.

The Apostles Baptized euery where, &
yet they neuer taught what is the formall,
material, efficiēt, or final cause of Baptism,
nor euer made mention of the Character de-
libe & indelible. The Apostles prayed, but
prayed in the spirit, folowing that saying of
the Gospel, *God is a spirit, and who so worship*
him, must worship a in the spirit, and in truth.
But nowe it appeareth, that it was not then
revealed vnto them, howe wee ought wth
all one prayer, and lyke reuerence, woo-
ship an Image or a tunc perhaps with a coale
on the wall, as if the same were Christ hym
selfe. So it be made with.ii. blissing fingers
of the right hand stretched out, & a bal in the
other, with long heare shedd, and a coronet
in manner of a platter vpon his noddle, de-
cked with thre sunne beames. For who is he
so pregnāt witted, that might euer grope out
these misteries, vlesse he had spent whole
xxvi.

The praise of Follie.

xxvi. peeres together in studying the Physicalls and Vltamundans of Duns, & Aristotle? The Apostles also preached grace vnto the people: but yet they neuer made so narrow distinction betweene gratia gratis data, and gratia gratificans. They exhorted men to good woorkes, yet neuer put difference betweene opus operans, and opus operatum. They bydde vs in many places keepe charitie: but neuer deuide the same into Charitas infusa, & Charitas operata, nor expound not whether it be an accident, or a substance, a create, or an vncreate thyng. They dishoie vs from sinne, but I reue my selfe, if euer they coulde cunningly define, what that should be, wee call sinne? Unlesse they were inspyred with the spirite of these Duns doctours. For I can neuer beleue, that Paul, vpon whose wryting we may gesse what mynde the other Apostles had therein, would euer so often haue reprobued and condemned, such questions, disputations, genealogies, & conflictes of words (as he calleth them) in case hymselfe had euer been instructed in their fine quiddities. Namely, in as much as al the contentions, & debates in arguing, which chaunced in his time, were
but

The praise of folly.

but blunt, and very grosse, in comparison of these wise systred subtilties, that our Master doctours vse now a dayes. How be it they can so much their good, that where in any place they finde oughte writtē by the Apostles not formally, & Magistraliter, that they repproue not, but handsomely rather do interpretate it as best serueth for their purpose: bearing (as who sayth) thus much reuerence partly to the antiquitie, and partly to the name of Apostleship. And surely it were too muche to require so hygh matters at the Apostles handes, who neuer heard one worde thereof mencioned by their maister Christ. But in case they take eyther Chrysostome, Basill, or Hierome wpth the lyke tryppe, than they take it sufficient for them to subscribe, *that they allowe it not.* And yet those ancient good fathers, rather throughe theyr holpelyse and myracles, than by any argumentes and Syllogismes, confuted both Ethnikes, and Philosophers, and Jewes, beyng bent of nature to stubboznesse, yea and those also, netter a one of whom were able to compasse and vnderstande the leaste quodlibet of Duns.

But now, haue ye any paynim, or heretik,
that

The praise of a

that wyl not giue place and peecke straight
to so manye fye argumentes of our may-
ster Doctours : Unlesse he were so grosse,
that hee wylle not what they ment : or so
shainelesse to vylle at them : or rather sencer
with lyke armour : so that nowe they were
matches, as as if ye should set one enchaun-
ter against another, or an Olymer for a Row-
land. For then the battaile were euer new to
begin. And surely in my iudgement christen
princes shoulde doo politickely, in neede of
these bands of grosse Landknights, who not
seeldome (prooffe sheweth) doo speede as wel
euil as better, to arme, and send forth al these
hauling Dunsmen, and stubborne Occani-
stes, and inuincible Albertistes, together
with the whole rablement of Sophisters, a-
gainst the Turkes and Sarasins. They
shoulde see (I thinke verily) a straunge kynde
of skymishe, with such a victorie as neuer
was heard of. For who is he so colde harted,
that woulde not straight hee enflamed wth
theyr pregnant deuises : Or who is hee so
blunt & restiue, that coulde not wth theyr
prickant spurres be quickened : Or who so
cleere sighted, that may not wth such dark
mystes as they cast, be blynded?

But

The prayse of follie.

But al this perchaunce ye wene I speake
haile in mockage. And truely no maruaile.

Seeing euen amonges these Diuines
ye shall spynde out some such, as being insti-
tute in a better trade of learnyng, doe lothe,
and abhorre suche riddles and Sophisticall
trifles of these Dunsmen. Some other a-
gaine that doe curse and detest the same, as
a kinde of Sacrilege, esteeming it playne
wickednesse and impietie, to speake so vnre-
uerently by so highe secrets of Scripture,
whiche rather we should haue in veneration,
then after suche rate goe about to expound
them, or with so prophane Ethnical problems
to dispute vpon them, or arrogantly define
them, defilyng and bespottynge the maiestie
of holy scripture with so cold, nay rather fil-
thie wordes and sentences. But this not-
withstanding, the other coddies heades in the
meane while stande most pleasantly in theyr
owne grace, or verely stroke them selues
on the head.

So that occuppyng them selues both
hyghes and dayes, about these folish toyes,
they haue neuer thus much lesure, one too
read ouer the gospel, or Pauls Epistles: and
yet in trifelyng out the time thus in theyr
Hi **Scholes,**

The prayse of follie.

scholers, they beleue verily it is they, that
prop vp holy church, which els should go to
rupne, none otherwyse with their Syllogis-
mes, than Poetes feigne that Atlas the gy-
aunt susteineth heauen vpon his shoulders.
But now, how Lordly is their felicitie (trow-
pe) whyles they take vpon them to forme
& resourme holy scripture at their pleasure,
as if it it were a nose of waxe, or a Welsh-
mans hose? and whyles they woulde their
conclusions, whereunto a certaine of some v-
niuersitie haue subscribed, should bee holden
for more than estautes, yea more firme and
imolable, than the Bishop of Romes De-
cretals: And whyles also lyke iudges ouer
the whole worlde, they call eche thyng to re-
cantation, that one heare bredeth disagreeeth
from their explicite, and implicite conclu-
sions: Pronouncing as if it came from a
Prophetes mouth, howe *this proposition is
sclaunderous, this not reuerent, this smelleth
of the sagote, this soundeth naught.*
So wat now a daies, not Baptisme, nor
Gospell, nor Paule, ne Peter, nor Hierome,
ne Augustine, nor yet Thomas of Aquyne,
who is euen Aristotles heyre and one hand,
are able too make a man Christian, vnlesse
thess

The prayse of follie.

these father bachelers of diuinitie, do touch-
sane to subscribe vnto the same. So narrow &
profound iudgement haue they, in discussing
of all manner doubtcs. For who would euer
haue thought him to bee of no Catholyke be-
leeefe, that affirmed these two sayinges, ma-
tula putas, and matula putet: also olla ser-
uere, and olla seruere, to be both congruent,
vnlesse these wise men had taught vs the con-
trarie? Or who els might euer haue ridde the
Church from so great darknesse of errorcs,
which no man I thinke would euer haue
reade, or looked on, vnlesse they vnder the
great seales of their vniuersities, had in con-
demnyng discouered them? But are they
not most blisfull (crowye) whyles they busie
them selues hereabout? and mozeouer whyles
they describe and peincte vnto vs all thinges
done in hel, so exactly as if many peeres they
had sojourned in the Diuels court? Or
whyles as lyketh them they doe builde new
heauens, adding also one heauen set aboue al
the other, most sayre & rowmie, least els per-
chaunce saincts soules should haue no elbow-
roome to walk, or bāket, or play at tenes also
if the listed. With these, & with two thousand

R. ii.

such

The prayse of follie.

The solemne
reede
of Schoole
Doctours.

suche other trifles, are their heades so stuffed
and swolne vpppe, as not Iupiters head (trou
I) was euer so pestred; what tyme hee bo-
rowed Vulcanes are to hewe Pallas out of
his bzaine. And therfore haue ye no meruaile
at all, though at their Actes and Commen-
cementes yee doo see them swadled in with
so many cappes, coyues, and furde hoodes as
they weare, for else I thinke plainely their
heades woulde rine asunder. One thing, I
my selfe am wounte to laugh at, so often as I
heare them speak their barbarous bzasse la-
tine, wherein natheles they woulde be com-
peted most doctourlike. That whan they fumble
it out in such a sort, as none but fumbler
as they, may vnderstande them, yet doo they
call it a certain grace & finenesse, which eue-
ry body can not attaine vnto. For (saie they)
it is not for the dignitie of holie wytte, our
profession, that we shoulde be compelled to
followe any Grammer rules: whiche sure-
ly (so being) is a great maiestie of these
Duns doctours, if to them only it be lawfull
to speake false latine, notwithstanding that
many coblers and clowters can doo that as
well as they. Lastly now, they take the selues
in a manner for Gods peres, whan they are
saluted

The prayse of follie.

saluted solemnly by the name of maister doctours, or Magister noster: wherein they wyl like miserie to be included, as the Jewes say, there is in *Tetragrammaton*: and therefore they assume it to be a most great offence, if one doo wyte, **MAGISTER NOSTER** otherwise than with great letters, that and if ye turne the woordes, saying noster Magister, in steede of Magister noster, than at once ye disorder the maiesty of the Theologicall name. Now next vnto the felicitie of these maister Doctours, such doo approche as people calle Religious men, and Monkes, that is to say, solitarie liues, but by both names euill applied: seeing the greatest part of them are most farre frō religion, and none so cōmonly shall you meete roving abroad, euē in euery alehouse. Whose trade and obseruatiōe surely were most miserable and abiect, unlesse that I did many wayes releue them. For though this kinde of men be cōmonly so abhorred, as euē to meet with them at untwates, or next a bodie rising, it is taken for a signe of euil lueke all the day after: yet (Lorde) how they make them selues to be more than Cherubyns. For first they hold it a great holynesse, to medle so little wth

K. iiii. booke

The prayle of folle.

bookes, & learning, as scarce they know how
to read theyr owne names. And when they
roze forth (like a many of asses) in theyr mo-
nasteries; a number of psalmes not under-
standed, then they wene verely to feede saints
eares with a maruailous melodie. Howe-
ouer, some orders of them (namely Friers)
doe take a pride in theyr beggerie; in going
from doze to doze to aze theyr bread with a
great lowpyng voyce, pestryng men euery
where, both in innes, in wagens, and in pas-
sengers, not a little (I promise you) to the
hyndrance of other beggers. And thus (loe)
the blind minions, what with theyr gresy-
nesse, doltishnesse, rudenesse, and shamelesse
hangyng on men, do represente vnto vs (as
them selues say) the life of the apostles. But
is it not a comelinesse (trowe ye) when they
doe all thynges by certayne presidentes of
theyr orders, much lyke Mathematical
rules, which in no wise without offence, they
may alter, or swerue fro.

As for example, how many windowes they
must make to theyr shooes? what color, and
number of knottes goeth to theyr gyrdelles?
with what difference, and wherof must they
weedes

The prayse of follie,

wordes be made? of what breadth their leet or
thonges? how many bushelfuls their Coules?
how many ynches longe, their natted hear? and
how many houres for slepyng? Now who is
hee that seeth not how vnequal this equalitie
of theirs is, namely in such a dyuersenesse of
bodles, and dispositions? Yet vnder confidence
of these tryples, they do not only set lay mē as
light as butterflies, but euen amonges them
selues despyse eche other. So that for all the
apostolik charity, which they pprofesse, yet shal
not see the Nicke to fal together by the eares,
eether for a girdel of a contrary fashon, or a
garment somewhat of a browner or lyghter
colour. Yea, some of the being of a straighter
rule, are so sore punishers of their flesh, as out-
wardly they weare naue but sack cloth, & in-
wardly no better thā fine hollā: some others
again dare as soone touch popson as money,
neuer the more forbearing frō wyne, or con-
trextation of womē. Finally al their delite is
to accorde in no point as touching the rules
of their Religions. Nor they loke not howe
to resemble Christ, but sooner how amonges
them selues to be dissemblable: esteeming fur-
ther a great parte of their felicity to consist in
the names of their orders. For some of them

K. liii.

reioyce

The prayse of follie.

reioyce to be called Graye Friers, some
White, these Colletes, they Minors, other
Observaunts, other Crossed, some Benedi-
cines, some Bernardines, these Carmelites,
those Augustines, these Guithelmuses, those
Jacobites. &c. As who sayth; it were too
scender a name for them to be called bare
Christians. Now againe most part of them
are so geuen to their ceremonies, and tradi-
tions of men, as maketh them wene, that one
heaven is not a conuigne and sufficient re-
ward for so great merites of theirs, litle re-
membryng that Christ nothing regardyng
their superstitions, wyl onely call to account
howe they haue obserued his precept of cha-
ritie. Here one of them (maybe chaunced)
wyl for his discharge shewe forth a trough
stuffed full of all kinde of fishe. An other, wyl
poure forth an hundred quarters of Psalmes,
An other, wyl number vp millions of fa-
stinges, castyng God in the teeth, that so often
with eatyng but one meale a daye, his bellye
was neare burst. An other, wyl bryng
forth whole packes of Ceremonies, so ma-
ny as scarce might be freighted in seven great
Hulkes.

An other, wyl make his aduauce, that
whole

The prayse of folle.

whole threescore yeares together, he neuer touched money, but (at least) his handes were fenced with two payre of gloves. Another, Wyl shewe forth his Cowle on Soapularie so sweettie, and full of grease, as no Meryner would gladly put it on. Another, Wyl say, that since the tyme of his Noviceshippe he neuer passed the bandes of his Cloyster, muche like a Sponge cleaung ever to one place. Another, That he is hoarse with dayly singing. Another, Howe tharome too muche solitarie, he is fallen into a beummednesse. Another, Howe his tongue through continuall silence, hath loste his use. But Christe interrupting theyz Selfboastes, whiche els would never take ende, whence cometh (wylt he saye) this newe race of Iemes? I doo acknowledge but one Law and Rule for myne, whereof I heare never a woorde spoken. For whylom playnly, and by no shadowe of parables, I promised my Fathers kingdome not to Cowles, nor Rosories, nor set fastings, but rather to the woorkes of charitie: nor I knowe none such, as too much knowe their owne good woorkes. These men would be counted halier then my selfe: let them dwell therefore, if they last, in Pasquils heauen.

K.v.

Or

The prayse of follic:

Or doo they cause those to prepare a new hea-
uen for them, whose traditions they haue pre-
ferred before my preceptes. Now when they
heare Christ say thus, & see both carters and
ploughmē preferred before them, with what
countenance (suppose ye) wil one of them be-
hold an other? Neuerthelesse in the meane
tyme they are happy in their owne hope, not
without my helpe largely employed on thē.
Specially seeing for all they are dead (as
they say) to this world, no man dare yet con-
temne them, and least of all freers, in as
much as they are maisters of mens secrets,
by vertue of that they cal Confession: which
secretes they count it great sinne to discouer,
vnlesse at some tymes haupng tasted a litle
of the Ale, they thinke good to recreate them
selues with sporting tales & crashe, onely by
coniectures and likelihoodes to point you to
the thing, suppressing yet mē's nam's of their
modestie. That & if any mā styreth by these
Dorsets, then in sermons to the people haue
they a ready way to weake their tene, by tou-
ching their enemies not directly, but in para-
bles, so closely I warrāt you, as no mā could
not perceiue thē, but if he perceyued nothing
at all. And neuer wyl they make an ende of
barking,

The prayse of follie.

barking, tyll some fat mofel be cast them, to
stop their mouthes. But who in the meane
while would not gladlyer behold one of these
Freer preachers, how they counterfeite the
Rhetoricians in their sermons (loofely God
knoweth) but yet fearely folowing those rules
that Oratoys haue writte of the Arte of pro-
nouncing, then any stage playet, or Italian
Parsoner. Good Lord, what straunge ie-
stures they frame: howe they sing their
woydes: how they cast their armes hither &
thither: how they chaunge the copie of their
countenaunces: how they mingle al things
with outcryes: which their said art in prea-
ching, conueighed by one Freer to another,
as it were from hand to hand, for a myche
pryde thing, albeit vnleeful for me to know,
yet I shal make you a gesse at it as neare as
I can.

In the begynnynge therfore of their Ser. Preachers.
mons, they vse some invocation, but that they
borow of the poets. The admit the id Theme
run on charity, they fetch their proheme frō
Nylus the great riuer in Aegypt. Or enten-
dyng to expound the mysterie of the Crosse,
they begyn aptly w Bel the dragon of Baby-
lon. Or dysputing of fasting, they fetch their
race

The prayse of follie,

A mad tale of
a Preacher.

race from the. xii. signes of the Zodiacke;
D^r purposyng to speake of sayth, they make
a longe preambule how a Circle in Geometrie
may bee made Quadrate. I my selfe heard
once a solenne Lowte, (I crie you mercie)
a solenne learned man I should haue saide,
who in his sermō, before a gret assemble, ta-
kyng upon hym to declare the mystry of the
Trinitie, to the ende he myght both shew his
learnynge to the people, and satisfie the eares
of some doctours there present, toke a new
fetch in his matter. For what from letters
or sillables, and two dictions, and then the
concordes betwene the Nowne and the
Verbe, the Nowne adiectiue and Substan-
tiue (diuers of the audience nowe merray-
lyng, and sayng to them selues, what the vi-
uel aplyeth he) at the last he brought it to this
passe, that he shewed the figure of the whole
trinitie to be so exactly described & expressed
in the rules of the grammer, as no geometrick
myght plainly draw it with his finger in the
dust. Which sermō the sayd doctourlike
doctoure whole eyght monethes together so
ernestly had sweate about, as vntill this daie
he is as poreblinde as a beetle.

And no marvaile seeing he drew vp all
the

The prayse of follie.

the sharpnesse of his eie sight, to the poince of his engin: but for al that, he nothing forethinketh his blindnesse, rather takyng the same for to cheape a price of such a gloze as he wanne thereby.

Likewise, not long ago I was present at the sermon of an other famous doctoure, being almost 80. yeres old, and thereto so doctorelike, as if Duns were newe arisen in hym, who enterding to disclose the misterye of the name of Iesu, with greate subtiltie shewed, how euen in the very letters was as much puthe included, as myght be gathered thereof. For whereas it is declinable but in thre cases, as Iesus, Iesum, Iesu, that (sayed he) was a manifest representation of the Trinitie. Then because the first termination of Iesus endeth in S. the second in M. the third in V. therby laye a right secret misterie, in as much (quod he) as the verie letters doe declare that Iesus, is Summus, Medius, and Vltimus, (that is) the first, the middest, and the last. An other misterie he alleged farre more strange than these, diuiding this woord Iesus as it were by geometrie into two egall parts, leauing S. in maner of a stickler in the midle: which letter

The prayse of follie.

ter in the Hebrewes A B C. is *Shin*, and they cal it *Syn*. Now *sinne* (quoth he) in english is as much to say as a deadly offence against God: so hereby it appeareth, that Iesus was the stickler or mediator, that toke on him the finnes of this worlde. This so strange and farre fetched a beginning, all men did gape at so, chiefly the doctours there present, as little lacked that they were not chaunged through a stormednesse into stones, as poets feigne by Niobes. whereas I for my part through laughter, had almost let goe a skape, as Priapus did for feare of the. ii. witches Canidia, and Saggana, when it chaunced hym to se theyr sorceries by nyght season: and who could haue blamed me if I had so doen? for what did euer Demosthenes or Cicero, vse the lyke farre fetch in any of theyr orations? They toke that Proheme to bee faultie, which hung not appliably with the rest of their matter: as who sayth, there be any man so grosse that euen of nature is not instructed to doe so much. But my doctours now a dayes take they preamble (so they cal it) to be most Rethorical when it ioyneth lesse with any other part of theyr Theme: which maketh the hearer, meruayllyng at the estrangenesse of the

The prayse of follie.

of the deuile oftentimes to murther to him-
selfe, now whither the duell wilt thou. Thirdly
in steede of a narration, they expound some-
what of the Gospel, but that very briesly, and
shortly passed ouer, where as they ought
to entreat thereof only, all they? sermon
through. In the fourth place, falling as it
were into a new matter, they moue some
doctoꝝ all question, some tyme suche as tou-
cheth neyther heauen nor earth, which they
take yet to serue much to they? purpose. And
here (loe) they begin to spread their armes,
in alleging authorities out of solēne doctours,
subtile doctours, most subtile doctours, sera-
phicall doctours, holy doctours, irrefragable
doctours, and such other goodly bigge names
of their Schole pillers. And here they spowte
out their Sillogismes, their maiors, minors,
& cōclusions, their corollaries, & most balde
suppositions, with suche other trifles befoze
the rude people, as if they were in their most
ruffe disputing Pro & cōtra in their scholes.
Resteth now the fifth Act oꝝ part, wherin is be-
houeth them to shew forth al their cunning &
profundity. Here now (may chaunce) they
come forth wth som folish tale take out of vitas
patrū, oꝝ gesta Romanorū, moralising the
same

The prayse of follie.

same both Allegorically, Tropologically, and Anagogically. And thus much after this rate doo they knitte vp all their Chimeras, or straunge shapen beast, with sundrier sortes of formes and fashions, than euer Horace described it, in the begynnyng of hys booke De arte Poetica.

But they haue learned, I wotte neuer of whome, that the entrie and beginning of an Oration must bee rauinely vttered without any lowde voyce, or exclamation. So they therefore beginne their preambles so stillly, as scarce they can heare their owne voyces, perhaps because it auaileth them to speake somewhat, that none should vnderstande.

They haue heard also how cryings out must sometimes be bled to moue bype mens affections: and therefore speakyng a pretie whyle all stillly, euen at a byunt they fall into a skreking kepe, and fill mens eares with a crying whistlenesse, where they haue least nede at al. Whereouer because they haue reade in Rhetoryke booke, that an Oration should somewhat kinde, and ware hote in proesse of argumentes: They, in euery part of their Sermons, the entrie into the same being somewhat more demurely pronounced, by and by

The prayse of Follie.

doe fall intoo a wonderous lowde chafyng
boyce, bee the matter they entreate of neuer
so colde, and haue of so, as if their breathes
failed the. Lastly hauing vnderstood, that Re-
thoricians geue certayne precepts of laugh-
ter sterryng, they also payne them selues to
enterlace their Sermons with some mery
conceites: but (O the will of God) how full
of grace be the same: and how aptly brought
in their right places) *as if an Asse were set to
playe on a Gitterne.* Sometimes also they fare
as they woulde nippe folke with their quip-
pies, but so feyndly (God knoweth) as rather
they do tickle, thā pinch depelier. But neuer
do they flatter more kindly, than whan they
pretende to speake most freely, and without
respect. Finally all their cast in preaching is
such, as a mā would sweare they had gone to
schole with these Ceretans, such as in Italie
are wōt in the market place stāding on stals
les, or where they may be seen best, to preach
vnto the people in commendation of some par-
done, feyned medecines, or such lyke toyes
of their owne inuention, to get money with-
all, and bleare the simples eyes. Which
Ceretans natheles doe farre passe them in
their grace: All be it (to speake indifferently,

The Praise of Folie.

the one of them is so lyke the other, as none
wyl doubt, but epyther they haue learned at
those, or those at these agayne. But what
nede these my frier preachers to passe there-
on: seeing through my procurement they
neuer misse of such, as in hearyng them bee-
leue veryly they heare Demosthenes, and
Ciceros matches: on which opinion chiefly
be merchauntes, and good wiues, whose
eares and lippyng, friers do wholly studie to
satisfie. For merchants in case they be hand-
somely glosed, are wont to geue them in
Commendum some portion of theyr mis-
gotten goodes, and women besides many o-
ther considerations are specially enclined to
them, for that they are wont to poure into
theyr bosomes what euer euil wyl they beare
in their hartes agaynst their husbands. Thus,
yee consider (I trow) how muche thys race
of Religious men, is endetted vnto me, whē
nowe with theyr Ceremonies and sonde
fantasies of theyr owne, now with theyr bau-
lyng and cryng out in pulpites, they doe ex-
ercise a maner of tyranny among men, and
would be counted for more then Paules, or
Antonies. But seing they be suche iuglers,
as can no lesse unkindly dissemble, and seme
not

The prayse of Follie.

not to acknowledge my benefites employed
on them, then they are otherwise craftilie
counterfeitours of holynesse, I holde it best
to speake no more of them. For I long sore,
a litle now to treat of kinges and princes
liues, who most playnly, and gentilmanly,
as gentylmen doe enterpryue me. Whereas
if they consider well what belongeth to theyr
estates, now I see not what life myght bee
more carefull then theyr, nor lesse to be de-
spised. For suche shall neuer thus see that
a kyngdome should eyther by vsurpation, or
any other wrongfull title bee sought for, as
doo way with themselves. What a charge he
susteyneth on his shoulders, that ryghtly wil
execute the office of a prince: who takyng vp-
on hym the rule of thyngs, doth now admy-
nistre not his owne, but rather the affayres
of many, whereby he should thynk of naught
els but the cōmon weale: obseruing iustly the
lawes, whereof he is both founder, and ouer-
seer, to the ende his vpryghtnesse and inte-
gritie may be a president to his vnder rulers
& officers, whē eyther being iust & vertuous.
like a blisful starre of luckly aspect he may
bring both health & comfort to al his subie-
ctes, or otherwise, like a pestilent Comet, to

The Praise of Folie.

be their ruine and destruction. In as much as meaner mens byces be not so much marked, nor so largely diuulged. But a Prince is set in that place, where as if he wrie hym self neuer so little from that becommeth hym, strayght waies the infection of the example crepeth contagiously to many men. Besides that, how much moze the height of a princes fortune may bee a meanes to peruerter hym from the ryght trade, eyther throught pleasure, libertie, adulation, or delectation, so much the warerlier should he resist them, watching diligently, lest at any time beeing seduced, he doo swerue from his duettie. And lastly (omitting treasons, hatreds, and other perils or dreeds, wherewith a Prince is infected) if he remembre how the dome also of the hyghest, and most rightfull king of all, hangeth ouer his head, who soone after will call hym to accompte for the least fault he hath done, yea and that the narowlier, the greater state he had committed to hym:

These thinges, (I saye) and many lyke hereto, if a Prince doo perpende well, (and perpende them hee must needes if hee hath wisdom) I beleene surely hee should take his sleepe and fode, with lesse gladnesse than

The prayse of Follie.

than a farre meaner person doeth . But
now , how many princes haue you which
through my procurement , remitting all care
and charge hercof to the goddes do for the
most part onely , tende theyr owne pleasure:
So that admite we feigne now the image of
some one prince , such as not seldome hath
ben , a man (for example) unskilled in the
lawes , enemy in a manner to the common
weale , geuen onely to his peculier profite,
addicted all to voluptuousnesse , an hater of
learnynge , an hater of libertie , and of the
truth , caryng nothyng lesse then for the
aduancement of his countrey , but rather ap-
plyng al thinges to his owne pleasure and
commoditie . And now (on gods name) geue The appa-
raile of a
prince .
him a chayne about his necke , for token that
all vertues shoulde agreably be enchayned
in hym : geue him also a crowne sette with
perle and stone , in signe he ought to excelle
others in al princely vertues : then a sceptre
in his hand betokenyng iustice with an vp-
ryght mind on al sides : lastly a Robe of pur-
pyle which signifieth zeale and feruent affec-
tion toward his subiects : This manner ap-
paraile (I say) if that prince shoulde duely
conferre with his liuing : I wene he would

The Praise of Folie,

be ashamed to weare it, fearing lest some fine expositor might turne al his pompe & solemnesse of royal Robes, into derision: namely, when he hath no maner part of a pynce in hym, sayng onely the clothing.

Now likewise what say you to Courtyers? These million gaybescene gentlemen, who being for the most part as fawnyng, as feruile, as wylelesse, and as abiect as can be deuised, would be taken yet among all men, for the pyncepal. But although their pryde in other poyntes exceedeth, yet herein surely they shew a great modestie, when being contented to haue their bodyes outwardly garnished with gold, with gemmes, with silkes, and with other representations of vertue and wisdom, they geue ouer the studie, and vse of the thinges selfe to other men, not caryng howe they leaue theyr myndes naked, without any apparell of discipline: reputyng them selues most happye, for that they haue learned the phrase of Court spech, at euery woorde to choppe in these goodly titles of honour, Your noble Grace, your royall highnesse, your excellent Maiestie. And that their faces like visors wyl blushe at nothyng: and finally, that in boudyng,
and

The prayse of Follie.

and in fliringe, they can flatter pleasantly.
For these bee the qualyties they holde moste
meete for a kynd gentelman, and ruffler of
the courte. Be nowe who so narrowlier would
approche, and ensearch their trade of lpying,
shoulde fynde them I warrant you, to bee
more blunte and vnwittie, than euer were
the auncient people of Phceacia, and thereto
more dissolute than those woers were that
despyed Penelopes in mariage. Sponsi Pe-
nelopes, yee knowe what foloweth in the
verse, which I had rather that Eccho (as she
euer dooth the later woozdes) should declare
vnto you, than I.

Sponsi Pene-
lopes nebulo-
nes Alcanoiz.

These my hoglinges sleepe every day till
mydnoone, and haupng euen yet their eyes
full of sleepe, they sende then for some hun-
tyng chaplayne, who whyles they are in ma-
king ready, or rather ryling out of their bed-
des, may sling them by a post masse. In the
necke whereof commes their bzeakfast, and
that scantly finished, goe they to diner. After
that, to the dysse, to tables, to cardes, or to
bowles, now with Testers, now with fooles,
now with courtesanes, daūces, & daliaunces
to tryfle out the tyme, not without one, or two
collatiōs afore supper, and after supper their

L. iiii.

bankettes

The Praise of Folie.

bankets one vpon an other. And thus without telyng any tediousnes of theyr life, they passe easily ouer bothe houres, dayes, monthes, yeres, and whole ages. In sozt that I my selfe am not seldome thzough hauntyng with them made the fatter, and gladly would neuer part company, sauing that sometime seing howe amonges damoyseles and Madames of the court, they shewe themselves in theyr maistresses colours & comenly do vaunt them selues of that they haue not, or neuer did, I cannot kepe my selfe from laughter. Moreouer seing howe amonges those Nymphes and Madames, eche reputeth hir selfe the moze worthie of honoure and estate, the longer taile she trayneth after hir. Seeing also how the gentlemen of the court doe shoue one another, and please for a shewe of estimation to bee next theyr prince, as who sayth, depeliest in his fauour. And seepng lastly how they stand in theyr owne conceit, muche esteeming them selues, as the moze worthy a cappe the reuerence, the greater chaynes they haue, and if they despred not onely to shewe theyr riches in wearing the, but also theyr strength of shoulders in bearyng them. But now (on gods halfe

The Praise of Folie.

halfe) no lenger then of late daies, Pope holy fathers of Rome, Skarlet cardinals, and blessing bishops, haue not onely folowed the steppes of princes, as touching theyr pompe and magnificence, but don also what they can to surpasse them. Yet surely if a bishop perpended with himselfe, what is ment by the linen rochet so purely of white that he weareth: Mery that his lining likewise should be nete, and cleane from any spotte of sinne: or if he thought thus, that his myre beeing deuided so intoo two hornes, eche tpype whereof is wyth the lyke knobbe gathered together, were set for a figure of the perfect knowledge hee ought to haue both in the olde and new Testament. Or if he wiste that the gloues on his handes did signifie, how he ought as purely, and without any soyle of worldynesse to administer the sacramentes: And howe his crosstiers staffe admonished him of the wakery charge he should take ouer his flocke: And how his crosse borne before him (be hee an Archebishop) pretended victorie ouer al worldly affections: These figures I say and many like hereto, in case a bishop did conster & conferre accordingly, I beleue he could not chose but

Cardinals
Bishops.

The apparrell of
a Bishop.

lead

The Praise of Folie.

lead an heaue and carefull lyfe : Wea but at these dayes (I can tel you) they take as little thought herefore, as all their thought is how they may faire feede them selues, remittynge all care of their flocke vnto Christ, or rather resigning the same to suche as they call their bicares, and Suffragans. In which case they remembre little their name. For Episcopus, is as much to saye, as a superintendent or watcheman, who busily tended and toke heede to hys charge and commission.

Howbeit (in deede) as touching fishing for money, and heaping vp of treasure bagges, they furnishe fully that their names importeth, and therein shew them selues to bee no blynde watchemen.

Moreouer, if Cardinals likewise did consider (seeing they chalenge to succede in the Apostles places) how at their handes also is required that sanctitie and perfection, that the Apostles were of: And further, how they are no Lordes, but rather stewardes and administratours of spiritual gifts & graces, for the which soone after they must due ly & exactly render account: Wea if they dyd but argue a whyle vnto them selues vppon theyr garments, & thinke thus: *Wardie the whitenesse,*

The apparaille
of cardinals.

The Praise of Folie.

nesse, & pure netenesse of this rochet I weare on, signifieth how I also should leade a pure & right innocent life. This crymosen gowne, which I haue vnderneath it, admoniseth me I should be as feruently enflamed in the loue of God. This vttter robe also beeyng so large and so longe trained, as suffyled to ouerspyed mine, the most reuerende Fathers moyle, were she as lofty as any camel, doeth it not pretēd that charitie should abound, and be so largely spreade in me, as I should offer my selfe too helpe and releue al men: bee it in teaching, exhorting, comforting, rebukynge, or aduersising my euen Christen: or bee it in appeasing of warres betwene countreys, or resistyng of wicked princes, yea or in spēding of my blod for Christes sake, muche more my worldly goods with a gladde hert: Howbeit I see not by reason, what I should do with worldly goodes. I, that take vpon me wholly to imitate & represent the Apostles, who like good soules went poozely and barefooted. These things (I say) if Cardinals did consider and take wel too heart, they woulde not gape so greedily after that dignitie, nay wpyllinglier wold refuse it, or at lest, as did the Primitive Apostles, leade a trauaillsome & careful lyfe,

The Praise of Folie.

Bishops of
Rome.

life, in attending to their offices. Moreover, if these thise holy fathers, Popes of Rome and Christes vicars (as they name them selues) dyd as earnestly folow the example of Christes life, in embracing of pouertie, or painful teaching of the people, or in bearing of his crosse, and contempt of this world, or if they dyd but thinke a while vpon the name of Pope, which they chalenge peculiarly, & is as much to say, as Father, or the title of most holy Father, as they ioy to be called.

Now I see not what men in al the world should (by right) liue in greater carefulnesse & affliction, then they. Nor I see not vpon what hope the rankest Symoniakes of them might reckon, if they recked hereon, that all their goodes and faculties were too scant to deale in byzies to the Cardinales, for their voyces: or hauing once purchased that reome with their penny, would then so manfully defend & keepe it, both with sword, with popson, and with al other force. Good Lord, how many pleasures & commodities should wisdom at one plucke bereue them, in case they did but once looke her in the face? Wisdom said I? Nay, if they had but one grain of that salt, whercof Christ maketh mention

The Praise of Folie.

in the Gospell, they woulde not hoord by so huge heapes of gold, so high mountaines of honors, so large dominions, so many martial victories, so many offices, so many dispensations, so many reuenues, so many taxes, so many pardons, nor keepe such a number of pampred horses, & sicke hohne Boyles, nor hold such a court and gard about them, with infinite other solaces, to abounde, or rather swymme in delices. Vee see (I trow) in these few words, how great a fayre, & in maner a sea of pleasures & worldly wealthyns I haue set afore you. In place wherof is there any of you thinketh, that Peters successours at these dayes, wold willingly embrace fasting, watching, teares in belement prayer, dayly preaching, studying on the Scripture, or sighing at mens offences, with thousande other such dery troubles, whiche they dayly shoulde then be subiect to? Or doo yu iudge peraduenture they coulde easily finde in their hartes, that so many Scriueners, so many Registers, so many Notaries, so many Advocates, so many Promoters, so many Secretaries, so many Hoyle Litters, so many Horsekeepers, so many Gentlemen of household, so manye Applesquiets, so manye

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Bauders,

Vertues ap-
like.

The Praise of Follie.

Bauds, (I had almost spoken a softer word, but I feare me it would haue sounded harder to your eares:) briesly, so great a rabiement of sundry men as doo weigh downe (I crye you mercy) I meant, doo waite on the See of Rome, should haue cause to crie out on thē, when with the turne of an hande, through their conuersion to a sobyer course of liuyng, those might wel penough be driuen to die for hunger: specially seeing aboute the rigour and extremitie of such an heynous act, a farre more detestable inconuenience shoulde folowe, when therby the princes selfe, and pyl-lers of the church, yea the very Lampes (on Gods name) which light the world, should be called backe againe to a bag and a staffe: whereas els they haue founde out so good a shift and conueighance, what euer labour or toyle belongeth to their offices, to cast it wholly on Peter and Pauls shoulders, who haue leysour penough to weelde it, whiles they may so good cheape reserue vnto them selues, all the pleasure and commodities of the same? wherby it commeth to passe, & all through my drift, that no kinde of men lyue more delicately, nor with lesse care, thē these holy fathers doo. For as for Christ, he (they thinke)

The Praise of Folie.

thinke,) may easily yenough be pleased, so long as they shew them selues like Popes in their mystical Pontificalibus, bolstered by with ceremonies, and titles of blessednesse, reuerendnes, and sanctitie, to blesse & curse whom they lyst: what for the rest, it is stale with them, and out of vse at these dayes, to do myracles: painful to teach the people: cholericke to expound scripture: too idle a thing to pray: farre more myksoplike & womanish, to cast forth teares: vile, to be needy: dishonorable, to be ouercome: & most vnfitting for them, who scantly wyl admyt kings and Emperours to the kissing of their feete. Finally, it is an vnlaury thing to dye: and as reprochable to be hanged on the crosse. So that refusing to stande to any of these harde conditions, they rest onely vppon feates of Armes, with also those sugred and dulcet Benedictions of theirs, mentioned by Paule, with a thousande whereof I weene they woulde part more liberailly, then with one penny: and sticke hardly to their Interdictions, Suspensions, Aggrauations, Redaggrauations, Anathemisations, and paynted Pictures sette by in Churches, representing such as they note for cursed, or heretikes,

The Praise of Follic.

**Peters patri-
monie.**

heretikes, with also that their dreadfull thun-
derbolt of Excommunication, the dint wher-
of at their onely becke, is able to bring downe
seely soules a thousande myles beyonde the
deepest dungeon in hell: which thunderbolt
they leuel yet against no men so vehemently,
as against those, who through the Diuelles
instinction doo goe about to crop Peters pa-
trimonie: which (for al Peters owne wordes
in the Gospel: *Lord, we haue leaft al, to fol-
lowe thee*) they expound to be *landes, cities,
taxes, customes, and dominions*. For mainte-
nance whe reof, whyles kindled with the fer-
uent zeale of Chryste, they fight both with
sword, and with fire, then they wene they doo
gayly, and Apostolically defend Chrystes es-
pouse the church, in rebutting and manfully
(as they say) *fore chaling* of her enemies. As
who saith, there be any enemies moze pern-
tious to Chrysts church, the wicked bishops
them selues? who suffer Chrystes name for
lacke of their dayly remēbyng, to grow out
of the peoples knowledge: and doo bynde
Chryste to certayne money lawes of their
owne: and with wrested gloses and exposi-
tions, doo bastard hym: and lastly, through
the abhominable president of their life, doo
estloones

The praise of follic.

estesoones crucifie hym. In sort, that where-
as Chyistes Churche was first founded by-
on the blood of him hir authour, and raysed
by with the blood of the Apostles, and en-
larged with the blood of so many martyrs:
now, as though Chyist were no Chyist, or
that he were not able as befoze to conserue
hys chosen, they in hir defence doo try their
quarels onely at the swordes point.

That wheras warre (to speake absolutely)
is so cruell and despiteous a thyng, as rather
it becommeth wilde beastes, than men, ther-
to so furious and ragyng, as the verye Po-
etes doo sayne; that the Furies of hell doo
let it slippe: also so pestilent a thyng, as
draweth for traine all frothe and corruption
of manners after it: Further so vniust a
thing, as for the most parte is best executed
by the veriest theues & distrellours that be:
and lastly so vnchristian a thing, as in no-
thing accordeth with Chyist. Yet doo these
my Romish prelates, setting al other things
aside, onely studie and employ their time on
warre. In which exercise ye shall see some of
them being so olde & wasted, that their bones
rattle in their skynnes, so liuely yet turmoy-
ling, and prouely bent thereto, as if they
were

The praise of follic.

were waxen young againe : neyther sparing
for cosse, nor werped throught labours, ne
any thyng grudged in mynde or agast at it,
though thereby all lawes, religion, peace,
and tranquillitie in humaine things bee tur-
ned topsyturue. For woorkes they neuer so
bngodly, yet sayle they not of some glosers
learned men, who in hope of promotion,
will name and expounde this their ope mad-
nesse to bee a Zeale, to be a Pietie, to bee a
Spiritual manhood in them, brynging it by
a new found meanes to passe, that now a mā
may thrust his sworde into his brothers bel-
ly, obseruyng neuerthelesse that loue & per-
fecte charitie, which Chryst byddeth eche
Christian to owe another. And truely I am
as yet in doubt, whether *bishops in Almaine*
haue geuen, or rather taken example here-
at: seying that somewhat plainlier, & without
any obseruaunce at all, vled either in theyr
wede, or blissing, with such like Ceremonies
as Bpshops woulde bee knowen by, they
doo playnely shewe themselves to bee tem-
poral Princes, in sort that in a manner they
compt it vilitie for them to yelde theyr val-
iant soules to God, any where else than in a
foughten fielde.

And

The praise of follic.

And now, doo not *syngle Priests* (trowe *Priests*.
pe) cling as neere as they can to theyr pre-
lates deuotion: for (loe) howe warlike
both wyth swoordes, with stauies, and with
stones, yea and by the teeth also the good
vicars can strue for theyr cytherrightes: and
howe narrowly looke they to finde in olde
wytte or in doctours, any sentence seruing
for their purpose, to geue terrour thereby to
their simple parishioners, yea & beare them
downe, that they ought to paie more than
their tenthes limited. But for al theyr dili-
gence in that behalfe, they are as undiligent
remembryers what is wrytten in many places
of scripture concerning their duties, and
what they on the other part ought to render
and repaie vnto the people. No not theyr
shauen crownes at least can warne the, howe
Priests must be free from all worldlinesse,
to passe on nothing else, sauynge heauenlye
treasure. But sooner at these dayes my *Iolie*
for Iohns doo take it for a sufficient furniture
of their roomes, as long as they mumble o-
uer theyr *parryse* service, they care not howe
rashely, which (on my faith) I wonder what
god heareth, or vnderstandeth: scepynge they
themselues doo almost neyther heare, nor

The praise of follie

note what they say, when onely wyth theyr
tippes they make a certaine buzzing, no whit
proceeding from the hart. Howbeit (to save
the truth) it is a common catch naturally ge-
uen to all men aswel as priests, to watch well
for theyr owne lucre: for none is so vnkil-
full, that in this point can not scan the lawes
to the vttermost. But in case there bee any
waight or charge thereon depending, that
the clergie hath politikely learned to cast on
others shoulders. For lyke as princes are
wont to ordeyne vnder them many Depu-
ties and officers, who lykewyse doo substi-
tute Subdeputies in their steedes, so dooth
the Clergie of their goodnesse and singuler
modestie, remitte all care of holynesse to the
lay people, and laie folke charge such there-
with as they cal Ecclesiastical or Church-
men, as who sayth, al maner Christians had
not to doo with the Church, or as if they pro-
fessed no suche thyng by theyr first bowe of
Baptisme. Then againe priests that are na-
med Seculers, as dedicate to the worlde and
not to Christ, doo laie all this burden on re-
guler priestes, who likewise turne it ouer
to religious me, and religious men of an ea-
sier rule comen the same to those of a strait

The praise of follie.

ter rule. But al with one assent doo cast their charge on Friers neckes, who natheles finde a meanes yet to conuey the same to *monkes of the charterhouse*, in which only order, ho- lines as in hir graue lyeth hidden, yea and so hidden, as scant at any time she can be seen. Likewise holy fathers of Rome in tender cō- sideratiō of the dayly busines, wherewith they are occupied about their money harvest, are faine to put Bishops in trust with all other tootoo Apostolike labours. But Bishops disbeyne not through humilitie to let Parsons supplie theyr roomes: And Parsons lyke good fellowes woulde theyr Vicars should haue the doyng therof: Then Vicars sticke not to suffer friers to encroche vppon them: And they againe make resignement thereof, to such as dayly doo there the woul of Christes poore flocke.

But (hola) it is best for me to stoppe here, seeing I tooke not vpon me to 'boul out the maner of bishops and priests liuings now a daies: least any mā should deeme howe I rather intended to rattle vp their vices, than to spredde myne owne praise, or least ye might mistake me, as if good and vertuous princes were tamed of mee, whiles foolishly accor-

*Folle erreth
seth hir selfe
that she speaketh
of the*

The praise of follie.

wicked and
not of the
good men.

Fortune
lied with
Follie.

ding to my custome I do commend the wicked. Nay rather I haue touched thus much, with few words, to the end it may appeare, how no mortal man can liue sweetely in ioy and pleasure, vnlesse he bee a brother of my fraternitie, & haue mee to his friend & good lady. For else, who is he dare looke for good hap, seeing Fortune hir selfe, the guidresse of al worldly chaunces, is so much bent on my side, as euer for the most part she is bea-uy maistresse, & cōtrarious to these wisemē, whereas to fooles on the other side shee dealeth hir giftes so largely, as if she crammed the same into their mouthes whiles they are sleepeyng. We remember (I trowe) what is writen of Timotheus that fortunate captain of the Athenians, whose good hap and successe in thynges gaue fyrst place to thys prouerbe, *Sleepe he neuer so fast, his nette catcheth for hym.* (For yee shall vnderstande, that of his cōtinual prosperous fortune painters tooke occasion to pourtray his image sleepeyng, & fortune in the meane whiles throwyng into his nets both cities & dominiōs.) And likewise this other prouerbe, *The howlat sueth* (wherby was ment, that like as Pallas, to whō the howlat is consecrate, was bent

The praise of follie.

wont to giue good & happie successe to many of the Athenians purposes vnadvisedly enterprised: So likewise that armie, which had Timotheus once for captaine, was euer victorious, though ten to one it shouide haue chaunced otherwyle. But these prouerbes on the other side doo make against wisemen.

He was borne vnder an unluckie moone, or vppon a crosse daye: Or, he hath Seians horse (which horse as writers doo affyrme, had for his beautie diuers maysters successiuelly who all at last had euill ende.) Or, he hath gotten Tolosan golde, (the owners whereof sped no better than the former) with many such other prouerbes, which I hold it best to ouerpasse, least ye thought I had robbed my friende Erasmus Adagies. To retorne therefore to my matter, I saie, that Fortune fauoureth men not of the most foresight, and loueth bolde hazardours, suche as refuse no chaunce of the dysle. But wylsedom maketh men the warer, and moze fearefull, to aduenture any thing. Wherefore ye see dayly how these wisemen are euer pounded in beggery and necessitie, and fedde with smoke, leadyng forth theyr times as vnregarded, buesteemed, and vnaccepted.

*Who they
be that fortune ad-
uanceth.*

Wheras

The praise of follie.

Fooles ob-
taine pro-
motions be-
fore wise
men.

Whereas my fooles on the other syde
doo slowe in rycheffe and promotions , and
for shORTE doo flourish on all sydes . For
surely , and if yee compe it no small parcel
of felicitie to stande in good grace wyth
great men, & liue familiarly amonges those
my *golden gods*: nowe I see not what wyse-
dome can auaille you , nay rather howe it
should not much disprofit you, seeing they for
the most part being vnlearned , doo reprove
learning, as that they know not . Or if Ry-
cheffe be to be sought for , I pray you what
gaine can the merchant haue, when as wise-
dome biddeth , his conscience at any tyme
should stagger at a false othe , or being taken
wiche a plain lie, he did blush therat, or set but
a barly coine by al those grudging doubtes,
that wisemen put vpon theft & vsury. More-
ouer, who so gapeth after *spirituall dignities*
and *promotions*, (as there be rauens yenough
that watch for suche carein) let him thinke
that an asse or a colwherd shal sooner bee ad-
uanced to the same than any wise, or learned
man. Then in case thou esteemest womens
loue and dalliaunce (which sure is one of the
gretest parts of my play) They good podes
are wholly addicted to fooles and trifleral.

kcrs.

The praise of folly.

kers, yeanone otherwise do abhorre and shun
a wiseman, than they would doe a Scorpion.
Briefely, who soeuer they be, that entende to
liue frankly in least and gladnesse, for the
fyrste' poynt wyl see well that Maister Sage
bee shut out of the doores, and sooner let in a
ny maner beast then him.

Finally, what euer syde yee tourne you
to, be it to Prelates, to Princes, Judges, Ru
lers, friendes, or enemies, all thing is gotten
for money, which lyke as a wyseman dispi
seth, so I thinke it be, because hee canne not
come by it, it standeth so far from his reache,
as yf the Fox would eat no Grapes. Well,
albeit there bee no ende nor measure of my
praises, yet it must behoue me at last to make
an ende of my talke, I wyl leaue therefore.

No: yes forse.

So that first I may briefly touch vnto you,
how I want not of many great Authoꝝ, who
with theyꝝ wrytings & deeds also haue blaso
ned and set me forth, least els perchauce ye
might iudge that foolysly I stande in mine
owne conceit, or Lawyers might vse cauil
lations agaynst me, saying, I alleadged no
Books for my prooofe: Go to therfore, let
hs alleadge somewhat for our selfe, and re
hearse by as they doe, thinges nothinge ser

M. b.

uing

The praise of Folly,

uing to the purpose. So fyrst I say, that none wyl denye this olde sawe to bee true, how wheras the thing it self wāteth, there it is best at least to counterfet the same, wherevpon young chyldren that go to schole, haue for one of theyr fyrste lessons this verse of Cato taught them, whiche sayeth: It is most wysdome for a man in place to counterfet Folly.

Now therefore I praye you consyder with your selues, how great a weale and benefyte must Folly in deede be, wheras the counterfayting and shadow onely of the same, deserueth so much prayse at learned men.

Amongst whom mine owne good Horace, as a fatte and fayre fedde hoglynge of Epicures heard, aduiseeth men to mingle Follye with their graue counsels (albeit the addition he maketh of thort Follie, was not all of the cunningest.)

Also in an other place hee sayeth, it is a swete thing to bee a foole whan place requyreth: And then againe he confesseth, he had rather be holden for a Foole and an idyote, then beinge wise, to be barked at, and bitten of enery body. And Homer lykewise, whereas in all conditions

The praise of folly.

tions he prayseth and commendeth Telemachus, yet in diuers places he is wont to call hym childish and imprudent, which name these writers of Tragedies doe gladly for a token of good luck geue to boyes, and strip-lynges. But for Gods sake, what is els contained in Homers whole poesies of the sacred Booke called Ilias, saue onely the contentious debates of foolish Kinges, and foolish people: wherby it appeareth, that al the world is full of Fooles, as Cicero sayde rightlpe, in which so few wordes he gaue me as absolute and ample a prayse as might bee. For who is hee that knoweth not the value and goodnesse of a thinge to be more acceptable, the largelyer and more copiouslye that the same is spred into all parts. But it may bee (yee wyll saye) that Chyristen men geue no credence to these panim Autours: in whiche case (if yee thinke so good) I am content too proppe bp, and founde (as Doctozs say) my prayses vpo such textes as for witnesse of the same I shall fetch out of holy scripture. First of all prayinge diuines of theyr lawefull fauour, that they wyll lycence mee so to doe.

Next than because I take a great charge in
hand,

The world full
of fooles.

The praise of Folly,

hand, and it were no good manner to call the Muses eistsoones from theyr fountayne of Helicon, to come backe so great a iourney as is from thence hyther, namely for a matter finally pertainyng to their faculty, peradventure it were better wished of mee, whiles I playe the Doctresse of Diuinitie, and passe through these byambles, that the soule of Duns would a litle leaue Sorbone College, and enter into my brest, be he neuer so thorny and fuller of prickles than is any bycheon, to depart agayne when I haue done once, & if he lyt to the Galowes.

That woulde God I might properly take a new countenaunce, and were clad in a Docterylike appaarel: sayyng I feare least some of you would lay theft to my charge, as though I had priuilye picked our maister Doctors cuning out of their study desks, because I can so much Diuinitie without Booke. But haue ye no meruell though my continual and daily conuersation amongst Doctors, maketh mee to beare away some one worde or other: seeing the Figtree image of Priapus could in processe of time, as his Paister read Homer, marke and remember some Greeke vocables,

The prayse of folly.

And lyke wise Lucians Coker through long continuance and conuersinge amongst men, dyd learne so perfectly theyr speche. But now (on Gods name) to our matter: Solomon the Ecclesiast writeth in his fyrst chapter, *that the number of fooles is infynite*. Now where he speaketh of an infynite number, is it not as much, as if he comprehended al men therein, sayng onely a certayne, so fewe, as I can not tell if at any time they were seene at al: Much more expressely doth Ieremie confesse the same: *for eche man (sayeth hee) is made a foole in his owne wisdom*. So only vnto God bee loweth wisdom, and assigneth Folly for peculier vnto all men. Then agayne a litle aboue that, hee woulde no man shoulde glory in his owne wisdom: and why so mine owne good Hieremy: Forsoothe (wil he say) for that man hath no wisdom at all. But to retourne agayne to the Ecclesiast, What ment he (trow pee) by hys protestation, when hee lowdlye cryed out so, *Vanitie of vanities, and all is vanitie*: what? but (as afore I sayde) that this humayne life is naught but a certayne great playe of Folly: confirming (as who sayeth) that noble sentence of Cicero a litle afore recited, *how*

all

The prayse of folly

*all this world is full of Fooles . Whereouer
where the other wise Ecclesiasticus sayde, A
Foole chaungeth lyke the Moone, but a wise
man abydeth in one state as the Sunne? what
signified he els hereby: but that mankynde
is altogether foolyshe, and God only deser-
ueth the name of wisdom. For ye shal vnder-
stand, that by the Moone (accordinge to the
exposition of Doctors) is figured mankind,
and by the Sonne, whiche is the head and
fountayne of all light, is ment God himself,
the father and originall of all sapience.*

*Whereunto this maketh greatly, that Christ
hymselfe in the Gospell, denied any man to
bee called good, sauing God hym selfe.*

*Now therfore if euery man that is not wyle,
must be holden for foolyshe, and whosoever is
good, is wise also, (according as the Stoikes
doe affirme) than per consequent yee must
needes confesse, that mortall men are altoge-
ther wrapped in the bandes of Folly.*

*Furthermore, Solomon in his twenty and
foue chapter sayeth: Folly maketh Fooles
glad: wherein he confesseth playnly, that no-
thing in this lyfe can be swete or pleasant,
vnlesse that Folly peeple the same vnto you:*

and

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and hereunto maketh that saying also: *who exhorteth you to wisdom, exhorteth you too sorrow; and in much understanding, is much indignation.* and doth not this noble preacher playnely confirme the same, saying in his vii. chapter *That the harte of a wiseman is whereas sorrow is, and the hart of a Foole whereas gladnesse is.* Therefore Solomon thought it not sufficient to consume time about the knowledge of wisdom, vnles he further shold busy him selfe to know me also. That in case ye finally beleue me, mark I pray you his owne words in the fyrst chapter: *And I haue applyed my hart (sayeth he) to know wisdom and learning, and likewise to know errors and Follye:* wherein you must note this well, how it maketh much for my dignitie, that hee putteth Folly in the later place, namelye seeinge the Ecclesiast, or Church Preacher wrote it, and pardy ye know how the church order wil let, that who so is fyrst in dignitie, shall goe last in place, to the ende that how euer in other pointes, yet herein at least ye do obserue the precept of the Gospell.

But Folly to be farre more noble and excellent than wisdom, I weene I can proue you by witnesse of the Ecclesiasticus, who soeuer

was

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was authoꝝ of that booke in the xliiii. chapter of the same: whose text surely I hold it not best to recite vnto you, befoze ye see what shal haue aided the induction of mine argument, with answering handsomly vnto me, lyke as Plato introduceth those that dispute with Socrates to doe.

So fyrst I demaunde of you, what things to your iudgement ought soonest to bee kepte close and hidden, other those that are precious and rare to be gotten, or other that are vile and dogcheape in euery place: doe yee holde your peace? Now surely howeuer yee would dissemble, yet shall this olde Greeke pꝛouerbe answer for you: *the water pot is set behynde euery dore*: the auctoꝝtie of which pꝛouerbe let none of you bee so vngrubly to refel, seing Aristotle himselfe, the God of our maister Doctours doth in many places recite it: and in sadnesse I can not thinke, that any of you all is so mad, to leaue golde or precious stones in the high way: nay rather ye lay them vp in your most secret closets, & yet, that snot suffising, ye double lock them in the strongest cofers yee haue, whereas durst ye leaue lyinge still on the dunghill.

Ergo,

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Ergo, if that be hydden, that is more precious, and the other vile thinges are left abroad as buttended to, is it not manifest now, that wisdom which he forbyddeth to be hydden, is farre more vile than follie, which must according to his rede be locked vp and kept as close as may be: And now I am content to reherse you his owne woordes, (which are) *Better is the man that hydeth his follie, than he who hydeth his wisdom.*

But what say you to this, that scripture attributeth to fooles a certayne benignitie, and gentle whiteness of nature, condemning wisemen for proude and despisours of all others saue themselves: For so do I playnely take the meanyng of the Ecclesiaste in the .x. chapter. *But a foole (sayth he) that walketh in the strete, being hymselfe vnwise, supposeth all men to be fooles as he.* Now is it not (I pray you) a signe of an exceeding gentillesse in hym to make euery bodie his matche and felowe: that whereas none so base will not meanely stand yet in self reputatio, his curtesie is suche to deale euery man a fleece of his praise. Therefore Salomon beeing so great a kynge, was naught ashamed of my name, when he sayd in his .xxx. chapter,

Hi

I am

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I am most foole of al men: not Paul doctor of the gentils thought scorne therof, when writing to the Coriuthians, he sayd: I speak it as vnwise, that I more then others. &c. as who saith it were a great dishonour for him to be ouercome in follie. But here (loe) mee thinkes I heare how I am hissed at by some of these greeke professours, who study scripture in that tounge, and make as though other doctours at these dayes saw nothing, no more than crows doe when they eyes are peckt out, whiles with certaine annotations of their owne, they goe about to dulse mens eyes as with smoke: among which sorte of note makers, my friend Erasmus, whom often for honours sake, and good wyll, I doo mention, may be counted the seconde, if not the first. They (like penough) wyl repproue me, and D what a foolish allegatton is this, (wyl they say:) and howe meets a witnesse for Dame Folie to bring in? whereas the Apostles meanyng is farre otherwise, then shee dreameth it to be: For in these wordes he woulde not be taken for more foole then other, but when he had sayde, They are Ministers of Christe, and so am I also, to

the

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the end yet he should not be holdē for a baine glorious vaunter, in that he made hym selfe coequall with the other, he added as by correction, I more then other: signifying thereby, howe not onely he was matche to the other Apostles, but somewhat also their superiour: whiche although he would be taken for very trueth, yet least the arrogant auowing thereof myght partly haue offended mens eares, he dyd first shielde the same with the pretext of Follie, (saying) I speake it as the vnwiset, because he wyl what priuilege fooles haue to speake truth without offence.

Well, what euer Paule meant, when he wrote thus, I leaue hardely to them to dispute on: because I wyllyngher doo follow the auctoritie of other grosse & fat Doctors, who among bulgare folke, are in greatest reputation, so farforth as a great part of learned men also had leuer (by God) for more suretie be deceiued with them, then iudge bypon righter knowledge with these students of the Scripture in the thre tongues. For no man setteth more by these smatterers in the Greeke tongue, then they would do by as many chattering Iayes: chiefly seeing

R. ii.

that

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that a certayne glorious doctoure, whose name I doe suppress for the nones, lest els these Iayes would chatter this greeke taunt agaynst hym, *An asse to the harpe*, doth in expounding both magistrally and theologically this selfe same text from this popnet forwarde, *I more than others*, make it to be the head of a new sentence, putting also a new cleft and diuision in the same, which surely he could neuer haue doone, without a wonderous conueighance of Logike. But for more plainesse I will repete vnto you his owne wordes, not onely in forme, but also in matter (as scholemen say: And this was his exposition, *I speake it as the more vnwise* (that is to say quod he) *in case I seeme vnwise vnto you, because I do equall my selfe vnto the false Apostles, than more vnwise wyll you conuict me, in auancing my selfe afore them.* Neuerthelesse this goodly exposition not much beneath that, as if he had forgotten him selfe, falleth quite into another sense. But whereabout goe I now? Shall I stand to one onely example in my defence, seeing all doctours take it commonly for theyr priuilege, to stretch out heauen (that is to say, holy writ) lyke a cheuerel skynne

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Skymme? Seeing also how in Pauls epistles, the wordes of scripture fare as if they were of contrary senses, wheras being set in their ryght places, they do vary neuer a deale, if we geue credite to Hierome. For when Paul saw at Athenes an Altare dedicate to the Gods, the entitlyng wherof he thought good to bring in for a profe & corroboration of the Chrysten beleefe, leauing all the rest that made agaynst his purpose, he toke onely the two latter wordes of the same, (which were these) *to the vnkowne god*, yet in some part he was content to chaunge them to: for the whole superscription was set vp in this maner: *To the gods of Asia, Europa, and Africa, to the vnkowne, and estraunge Gods.*

So vpon this example of Paule I wene it procedeth, that commonly at these dayes my fayre broode of doctours do enterpryse to nippe of here and there, foure or fiue wordes of the whole, yea and those somethynge altered and corrupted (if it stand them vpon) to applie the same so botched together to theyr owne sense and commoditie, how euer that that goeth before, and that that foloweth, doeth nothynge serue to purpose, or rather make
It itte cleane

The prayse of follie.

cleane against them. Which their said iugling, they conueigh yet by so happy an vnshamefastnesse, as in this poynt Ciilians haue cause oftentimes to enuie Doctors of Diuinitie, whē now in allegations nothing making for the matter, they be so farre passed by them. For I pray you, (of friendship) tel me, what thing may be too hard for these doctors to bring about: seing how that great aforesaid doctor (I had almost blabbed forth his name againe, but I feare me I tel you of the greeke Adage) could draw out of Lukes woordes, the construction of a sentence, no more agreeable vnto Christes meaning therein, then fire is with water? For Christ when the imminent daunger of his death approached, what tyme, or neuer, it becometh good seruants most constantly to take their maisters part, and defend hym to their powers, as confederates in league doo one for an other, to the ende yet he might giue all confidence in suche manner defence out of his Apostles hartes, asked of them, whether they wanted ought, what tyme he sent them forth so bareely, without any manner prouision, not geuing them so much as shoes to save their feete from thornes and stones,

no3

The prayse of follie.

noꝝ yet a wallet to put their meat in: Wher-
unto when they had answered that they lac-
ked nothing: But nowe (quoth he) whoso of
you hath a wallet, let hym sel it, & his bag al-
so, yea, and whoso hath not, make he sale at
least of his coate, to buye hym a sworde.

Now, wheras it is manifest ynough, that
all Christes doctrine pꝛetenteth nought but
meekenesse, patience, and contempt of this
mortal life, whiche of you percepueth not
what he meant in this place: For I take it
plainly that he said thus, to geue his ambas-
sadors the Apostles, the better courage, to
the end, that they not only should set no store
by shooes, noꝝ by vittailing bagges, but
should cast away their coates also, the nym-
bler and moꝛe deliuerly to goe about their
charge and commission of the Gospell pꝛea-
ching, pꝛouidyng them selues of nought els,
but onely a sworde, not that sword that
theeves and murderers doo occuppe, but the
sword of the spirit, being whetted al on cha-
ritie, whose poynt pierceth into the inward
partes of mans harte, and cutteth al fleshe-
ly affections thence, so cleane, as nought re-
mayneth, sauyng pietie, and ardent loue to-
wardes God.

N. liii.

Br.

The prayse of follie.

But marke ye now (of felowship) howe warlike this famous Doctour twyseth the plaine and clere sense hereof. For by the swoorde (saith he) is meant defence agaynste persecution: and by the wallet, is understoode competent provision wee shoulde make of thynges necessarie to lyue withall. As (who saith) Christes mynde were chaunged, because hym seemed that he sent forth his ambassadours not halfe royally furnished, and therefore did recant here, and call backe his first Instructions geuen them. Or as if he had here forgotten those woordes, whiche afore he spake vnto them with suche a vehemencie, Yee shalbe blessed, when yee shalbe persecuted with all kinde of outrage and torment, but make yee no resistance agaynste those euylles yee shal suffer: for blessed be the meeke in spirite, not those that are fierce, and stubborne harted. Or as if it were quite out of his remembrance, that in other places he likeneth the to sparows & Lyles, as touching the small care that they shoulde take for their liuing. Now so much lacked, that he woulde haue the go weaponles, as rather they shoulde sel their coates fro their backes, to buye the same: and sooner goe naked, then without a
swoorde

-The prayse of follie.

Sword by their side. Moreover, like as vnder the name of a sword (as he expoundeth it) al manner of defence is cōteyned, that many repel iniurie and violence, so vnder the name of bag is cōprised what euer provision is made to lyue withal. And thus (loe) this deepe expositour of Gods wyl & meaning, setteth forth the Apostles cōplet armed, with Iauelins, bowes & arrowes, Slings, & Halfehakes, to preach the Gospel & Christes crosse. Lading them moreover with great males, & panyers well stuffed with vitailles, lest els perchance they might sometyme depart from their Vnnes bndyned. No not so much as this, might any thing moue this gay learned mā, that Christ hym selfe shortly after rebuking Peter, bydeth the swoorde shoulde be put vp agayne, which afore he commaunded so earnestly to be bought: and that it neuer was heard how the Apostles dyd at any tyme occupp sword and buckler, to resist their aduersaries violence; whiche neuerthelesse they woulde not haue sticke to doo, in case that Christes meanyng in these aforesayd words had been such, as he expoundeth it to be.

There is an other Doctour likewise of no lesse reputation then this former, but for
honours

R.b.

The prayse of follic.

honours sake I name hym not, who interpreting a place of Abacuc the Prophete, where he saith, *The Skynnes of the lande of Madian shalbe disparted and torne asunder:* nothing considering that the Prophete spake of the Madianites lodgings or tents for the field, which were made of beastes skynnes, as aunciently men in warfare vled, writeth plainly, that Abacuc dyd prophesie there of the sleapyng of S. Bartholomewes skynne.

I mee selfe not long agoe was present (as many tymes I am woont to be) at a certayn disputation, where diuers Doctours were assembled. There when one of them by chance had put forth a question, *By what authoritie of scripture heretiques ought sooner to be controlled by the fire, then confuted by argumentes?* An other auncient Father that late by hym, being so crabbed faced, as only the complexion of his hanging browes might tel you streight he was maister Doctour, answered in a great choler, that Paul hym selfe was the first ordeiner of that lawe, whereas in one of his Epistles it is read, *Hæreticum hominem post vnani & alteram correctionem deuica.* But I aske pardon at your delicate eares, because I cannot otherwise

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otherwise then in the Latine phrase expresse
is vnto you, *I exhort you* (saith Paul) *to de-
uite or shunne the company of heretiques, after
you shal haue once or twise reprovned them for
their erronious opinions.* Nowe when this
Doctour had thundred forth this Text in a
bygg voyce, making often repetitions of this
Latine word (*deuita*) so that many marue-
led now what the deuill he apled: at last he
concluded, that heretiques must be lifted
de vita, making two words therof, as who
saith, lifted out of life. Many laughed at this
fine exposition, and some there wer yet, who
toke the same for a very Theological inuen-
tion. But wheras others (that notwithstanding)
began to replie: by and by rose vp an
other much solemne and irrefragable doctor
to take his part. And thus lyeth the case
(quoeth he) *It is written, Suffer thou no mis-
doer to liue: now since that enery heretike mis-
doeth, Ergo, thou must suffer no heretike to
liue.* This Sillogisme being thus trussed vp
by hym (Lord) how all the assistance began
to woonder at his wittinesse, throughe con-
firmyng his Sentence, yea, and that the
sooner, seeyng none of them had the wytte
or learnyng to consider, how that Law was
first

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first ordeyned against *lottemögers*, *enchau-
ters* & *forcerers*, such as the Hebrews in their
tongue name witches. For els why should
not fornicatours, and drunkards by as good
reason, bee punished with the lyke paine of
death? But I play the verie foole in going
about to tel vnto you, al such bald deuyles of
these furde hoodedmen, beeing in deede so in-
numerable, as woulde not (on my consci-
ence) bee comprehended in all the large vo-
lumes of Crisypus, and Didymus, ta-
kyng hardely *Pytzharbertes abridgements*
for aduantage. Onely my meanyng was, to
aduertyse you, that seeing those dyuine mai-
ster Doctours durst take vpon them to wrest
and mystake Scripture in such sorte, than
muche more I muste bee bozne with, beeing
but a young doctresse, and like a woman sho-
ting forth my bolte at the gainest, if some-
tyme maye chaunce I laye not all my alle-
gations fully by leuell. But now at last I
leape backe agayne to saint Paule, & Glad-
ly (sayeth he) yee do beare wyth *vnwyse men*,
speakyng it by hym selfe) also in another
place, receiue you me, as *vnwise that I am*. &
further, I speake not this precisely as vpo Gods
precept, but rather in my owne *vnwyse dome*.

Chan

The prayse of follie.

Then againe, *we* (sayth he) *are become fooles for Christes sake*: Do you heare now how great prayles of Follie this so great an outour alleageth, yea and that more is, hee playnely enioyneth Follie vnto vs, for a thing most necessarie, and right, importyng to saluation: For who so semeth (sayeth hee) to bee wyse amonges you, let hym become a foole, to the ende he bee wyse in deede. How saye you my Maisters, woulde yee any more euident proofes than this, or an other exaple also in Lukes Gospell, where Iesus calleth the two Disciples fooles, with whome hee ioynded company by the way:

Thys in especiall maye bee taken for a These Argu-
mentuall, how Paule so great a dyuine spa- mentes must
rech not to attribute a manner foolishnesse, be taken as
yea vnto God also: where hee sayeth, what lie, not that E-
uer of God is foolishhe, is wyser yet than any rasinus mens
thyng in men: in expounding of which text, O- in deede,
rigen denieth it to be possible, that this folly
maye bee referred to the generall opinion of
men vppon the same. As appeareth by thys
other text of Paule, to reason of the misteries
of the crosse, is surely to such as beleene it not,
and do perishe in their peruersnesse, naught els
but Follie: But aye, what ayleth me to seke
so ma-

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so many textes of Scripture for witnesse of my wordes, seyng Christ hym selfe in the psalter doeth playnly speake thus vnto the father, *Thou knowest myne vnwisdomes*: So, not without some cause and respect we see in scripture, how fooles and simple soules stand highly in Gods fauour, which I take to be, that lyke as great princes haue wisemen in ielousie and suspicion as Iulius Caesar had Brutus and also Cassius, whereas hee nothing helde hymselfe adreadde of drunken Marke Anthony, and as Nero mistrusted Seneca, and Dionysius stode in doute of Plato, whereas, freely on the other syde they gaue themselves to the plesant company of men, of a grosser and more simple capacitie: So in lyke rate doeth Christe blame and reprove these worldly sages, who fully cleaue and stande to theyr owne wisdomes.

This by pauls wordes is confirmed where he sayth, *God hath chosen hym out of those that the world reputed for fooles.*

And in an other place: *God hath disposed to saue the world by foolishnesse, seeing that by wisdomes it myght not be conserued.* Yea God hymselfe doeth sufficiently confesse the same,

By folke
in these pla
ces is ment
godly simp
licitie and
by wise
domes a
worldly pr
iudicall

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same, whereas he cryed by the mouth of the prophet, *I shall confounde the wisdom of wisemen, and reprove the prudence of Sages:* So Christ in an other place rendereth thanks unto the father, that he had hidden the mystery of saluation from wisemen, and disclosed the same to youngelings (That is to say) to foolles: (For so the Greke woorde signifieth.)

And hereto serue the manyfold nippes and taunts, wherewith Christ in diuers places of the Gospell bayteth the Pharisees, & Scribes, and Doctoures of the law, taking earnestly yet the part of Simple and vlearned folkes. For is it not as much to say, *Woe be unto you, ye Scribes and Pharisees, as woe be unto you, ye wisemen?* But where finde you that euer be charged eyther yonglings, or women, or fishers, with that so heaute a woorde? For it seemeth properly that he delighted much in theyr simplicitie, euen like as kyndes of dumme beastes were not acceptable unto him, that were fardest remoued from all foxelyke wylinesse. And therefore chose he rather to ryde on an asse, albeit (so pleasing him) he myght as safely haue bestridden a Lions backe

The

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We read also that the *holy ghost* descended in the tykenesse of a *Culuer*, and not of an *Egle*, or a *Puttoke*. And besydes this, scripture in many places maketh mention of *harts*, of *faunes*, of *lambes*, & such liely beasts. Lyke as *Christ* doeth call his elect and chosen by the name of *Sheepe*, which beast is of at others the unwise (witnesseth this prouerb of *Aristotle*) his maners fauour of the *sheepe*, or he hath *sheepish conditions*: which quippe in way of reproche is vsed agaynst blocke-headed of the very selendrest capacitie. And yet we see, how *Christ* professeth hymselfe to be the herdsman of such a flocke: Yea and that more is, delighted hymselfe in the name of *Lambe* that *Ihon* the *Babtyst* gaue hym, when hee poynted hym thus to the people.

Loe here the *lambe of God*: which resemblance is likewise cited in many places of the *Apocalipse*

Now all these Textes that I haue alleaged do they not playnely testifie, that mortal men being fooles, are godly also: and that *Christ* hymselfe myndyng the releefe & redemption of mankynds follie, although he was the ineffable wisdom of the father, became yet a maner

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manner foole, wheras taking mans nature
vpon hym, he was founde both in fourme and
habite lyke vnto other men.

Such as Paule sayeth, hee was made sinne
also, to cure and heale the finnes of the
world: to which finnes yet it pleased hym
to minister none other medecines, then the
folly of the Crosse, by the handes of the A-
postles, beinge grosse and unskilled men:
whom nathlesse hee as diligentlpe dyd per-
swade vnto foolysynesse, as otherwylse he re-
tyred and dishoxted them from wisdom, in
alluringe them by examples shewed vppon
Children, vpon Byrdes of the ayre, and o-
ther thinges smally sensed or no whittle,
as which liue by no art nor forcedylste, and
lyketwile in warninge them to take no care
how they should vse their wordes, when
they were brought afore iudges and pre-
sidents, and further in forbidding them to
seeke out the accoumpt of times, or the
smallest moments of times. To the end
(as who sayth) they shoulde not leane to their
owne prudence, but with whole thought and
mynde depend on him, remitting all vnto his
discretion. Therunto this also may bee ap-
plyed, that God the creatour and first former

D.i.

of

The praise of follie

The tasting of
the fruit of the
tree of know-
ledge brought
in death.

of all things, forbad Adam vnder penaltie of death he should not tast of the fruit of the tree of Sience or knowledge. As who saith *Sience were the mere poyson to felicitie*: Accordinge wherto Paule also doeth openly repoue Sciēce for a thing most hurt some and pernicious, seeing it puffeth up the minde of man with selfe glory: Lyke as S. Bernarde also folowinge (as I take it) Paules sayde opinion, expoundeth the hill, whereon Lucifer established his seate, to be the hill of Science. And perchance it should not be the feblest argument, to saye that fooles synde so much grace and fauour afore God, as to Follye onely is geuen pardon and forgiuenesse of trespasses, whereas to wisdomē not so much as the least iore is remitted. In soyt that who soeuer doe are at Gods forgiuenes of their sins, although they wittingly did commit the same, yet will they vse a certeine colour and pretext of Folly for their excuse. For so doth Aaron in the Book of Numbers (if I well remember me) desire pardon of the punishmēt that his wīues faults deserved, Saying, I pray thee (O Lorde) not to lay to our charge this sinne, which we haue foolishly committed. And so doth Saul pray Dauid to forgiue him, for it appeareth (saide hee) that

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what I haue done foolishly. Then againe
theselfe Dauid speakeeth faire and humbly to
the Lord, in this wise, But I pray thee (o lord)
to pardon the iniquitie of thy seruauant, seeing
we haue done foolishly. As if hee thought hee
shoulde obtayne no mercy, vlesse hee had
layd folly & inconsideraunce to boote. But
what speake we of Dauid: knowinge how
Christ the sonne of god hanging on the crosse
did in this wise make intercession for his eni-
mies. Father, forgive the, and laide none other
excuse, for they know not what they doe. So
Paul in like maner writing to Timothi, said,
But hereof haue I obtayned the mercy of God,
in as much as ignorantly I offended in mine
incredulitie. Now what is it to say, I offen-
ded ignorantly, but that, I dyd it through
folly and not thorough malice: or what other
exposition can ye make, of heerfore haue I ob-
tayned mercy, than that els I should not haue
obtayned it, not hauing layd the wyte on foli-
ly: And no les maketh for vs, that sayinge of
Dauid in the Psalter, Lorde, take not to harte
the trespasses of my youth, and mine ignorances
remember not. Doe you mark now what two
colours he bringeth in for his purgatiō: that is
to say, Youth, which age I doe euer accom-
pany,

D. it.

pany,

and ignorantes speaking it in the Plurall number, to expresse thereby the greater copy and aboundance of his Folly.

Fynally, as it were an endlesse labour to tell you infynite such examples, so to knytte by shortly, I say in my conceite, that Christian Religion seemeth to haue a certayne sybshyp with simplicitie, and deuout foolysynesse, in nothing agreeing with worldye wisdom. But if ye are mee, as how? than do no more but consyder how Children, oldefolkes, women, and Fooles, are those amongst others that shew themselves deuoutest, and most inclined to Church Seruice, and holy things, reioycing to be present therat, in sorte that euer at masse tyme ye shal see them approche neereest vnto the Altars, euén through a certayne instinctiō of naturall seelynesse prouokynge them to God.

Think also how the very first authoꝝ & founders of Christian Religion were as sharpe aduersaries of al Science, and men trusting to their owne cunning, as otherwise friendly embracers of simplytie and playnesse.

Lastly perpende pee thys, how no manner Fooles are in apparence more idyotelyke, than such as are totally rauished, and inflamed

These wordes must not bee wrested to any euill sense otherwise than the autors ment.

The Praise of Follie.

med with the ardent zeale of Christian charitie. So launtyshly they deale their goodes a-brode, forget all iniuries done vnto them, suffer them selues to be deceued, put no differēce between frēds & foes, abhor all pleasures & delites of the body, are fed vppē and made fatte with fasting, watching, teares, labours, & despight, & disperse theyr owne lyfe, and desyre death aboue lyfe, briefely, seeme to be so astounded and past all common senses, which men lync by, as if their soules dwelled not in those bodies they beare about with them, but rather in some other mansion place. Which straunge trade of theirs I know not how to call, but well may it to the common iudgement of menne, appeare to bee a very madnesse, or rauinge of the wits.

Baruell ye the lesse therefore, that the Apostles were iudged by the wicked Ethnikes to be drunkards, as if theyr heades were ouercharged with new wine. And that Parle lykewise was holden for madde, of Felsus the president of Iurye, in these words, Thou rauest Paul, and much learninge of Bookes hath turned thee into madnesse. But freynge I haue once taken vp on mee to play the doctresse, putting on a Lyons hide

D.iii.

(as

The praise of follicie.

(as shei saie) let mee not sticke now to go thorow that, & to reach you this also, that the self same felicitie, which christians doe so hotly desire, and by so many labours doe seeke for, is naught els than a certayne kynde of raving in the spirit, and godly foolishnesse. Whiche wordes I would not ye should grate on, nor take them at the worste, but rather note the thing in deede as it lyeth. For first yee must thinke, how Christians in this point doe fully agree with the opinion of Platoes Sectators, how the soule of man beinge drowned and entangled in the fleshly bandes of the bodye, can not as beinge dusked with the grossenesse of the same, beholde and take fruition of the sight of very thinges as they are in deed. Whereupon Plato defyneth Phillosophy to be a meditation or remembrance of death, in as much as it plucketh and retireth the minde of man from visible and corporall thinges, to those that are invisible and godly. Which effect is in death also. Therfore so long as the soule within mā doth rightly and in due wise peruse the Organs of the bodye, so long is that man called sounde, and of good discretio: but when some of those bandes or conduites beinge once perished, yee doth busily labour to reconstrue by free

The praise of follic.

freedome, minding a certayne flight (as it were) and breaking loose from that fleshlye prison the body, by which struggling the whole frame of the senses, and inward powers is distoynded, you doe holde him for mad, and out of his right minde: which passion if it come perhaps through infirmitie, or faultinesse of any of those Organs, then doe all men precisely agree, that it is playne madnesse: Howbeit we see that euen this kynde of ravers do sometime also prophesy of things comming, and soberly become knowers of tranges, and aries, which earst they neuer learned, shewing to haue in them I wot neuer what espice of new inspiration and diuinitie: which undoubtedly chanceth, because the soule beinge somewhat enlarged, and made freer from the bodys yoke and contagiousnesse, beginneth a litle to exercise and welde her selfe accordinge too the proprietie of her owne nature.

Transle of
rauers.

And vpon like occasion many folk labouring in the extreme panges of death, are muche subiect (as I take it) to somewhat lyke hereto, as oft as if they were rauished in a tralice, they do speak of certayne wonderous things pertai

Diui. ning

The Praise of Follie

ning to another worlde. But and if the saide
wonderinge of the wittes doe befall a man
for that hee is right passingly moued & stir-
red vp with the loue of heauenlye thinges, I
doubt now whether it may be called the selfe
same kinde of madnesse, yet sure it is so nere
lyh therto, as many men now a dayes wyl
doubt neuer a whit to repute that his seruent
affection towards God, for a very dotage of
the mind. Namely seing a smial nūber of such
feely good soules as are deteined therewith, do
in all their deedes & lyuing repine, & disagree
from the whole bande of other mortall men.
Wherefore (I suppose) they are termed, as
Plato feineth, that one of those prisoners was
that sate bounden in a darke denne under
grounde (as before I recited unto you) whereas
naught was seene els, sauing shadowes and re-
presentations of things. That where by chance
the sayde prisoner escaped out of the denne,
and so comming abrode into this worlde, sawe
very thinges as they were in deede, yet ourning
of good will to his fellowes, to aduertise them
of the errorr they were in, hee was no whit be-
leeued of them, but rather laught to scorne;
For whereas he lyke a man of wisdom and
experience seemed to pitie thoyr madnesse and
great

The praiſe of folly.

great blyndneſſe in miſtaking ſo of thynges,
they on the other ſide dyd potte at hym, and
ſhrust hym out of theyr company, for a fran-
kyſe ſoule.

So fareth it by the vulgar ſorte of men,
who commonly haue thynges in greateſt
pryce and admiration, that are moſt ſen-
ſuall and bodily, as which they take to bee
only, and none other: whereas Goddes
folkes on the other parte, what euer draw-
eth neereſt to the bodily vſe, doo the ſooner
therefore deſpiſe and ſet lycht by it, forſo-
much as they are wholly rauſhed and geuen
to the contemplation of inuiſible thynges.
For as worldlynges haue rycheſſe in beſt
reputation, nexte thereto eſteemyng the
weale of theyr bodies, And leaſt regar-
ding the proſpyte of their ſoules, in caſe they
regarde it at all, for ſome of them beleene
there is no ſoule, becauſe they cannot ſee
it at the eye: So agayne deuoute perſons
put theyr whole confidence in God, be-
pyng the ſympleſt and moſt pure thyng of all
others, and ſecondly doo cheriſhe that, that
draweth neereſt to hym, I meane the ſpi-
rite, beſtowing no coſt nor tēdance on
theyr bodies, nor on pleaſures belongyng

The difference
betwene
worldly and
godly men.

The praise of Folly;

to the same.

But money of all thinges they neglecte,
and set no store by, no more than yee woulde
doo by thinges superfluous, or rather use-
some. That and if (maye chaunce) at any
tyme they bee enforced to goe about worldly
affayres, I can tell you yet, that they doo it
euilwillingly, and with a spyced stomacke.
So that (Paule sayth) they haue goodes, as
not hauyng goods: and possesse them, as not pos-
sessing them, by reason they varie so muche
from the vniuersall and vulgar sorte of men.
For although the Senses haue all a certaine
parentage and kynneship with the body, yet
be there of the same, some grosser in sub-
stance, as are feelyng, hearing, seeyng, smel-
ling, and tasting: some againe more leuered
and remoued from the body, as is memorie,
vnderstanding, and freewill.

Nowe seeyng that the soule of man hath
therein most strength and vigour, whereunto
she most applyeth hir selfe, therefore it com-
meth to passe, that holymen, the forces of
whose spirites is wholly bent vpon things con-
templatiue, which are most distaunt and al-
liened from the grosser senses, doo fare in the
cell, as if they were benummed, or brute of
iudges

The praise of folly.

Judgement, as dumme beastes are.
 Whereas contrary the soules of bulgar people are most rife & pregnant in those grosse rude senses of the body, beyng as blunt and dull yet, in the other fine powers of the witte.

And hereupon (I thinke) it cometh, that some deuoute persons (as it is written of them) dyd without apperceyuing the difference, drinke lampe oyle in steede of wine. So likewyse as concernyng the affections of the mynde, some of them bee of faster league and aliaunce to the body, as are fleshy luste, appetite to foode or sleepe, yre, pryde, and enuie, with suche other disordinate motions, wherewith holy mē are euer at vnappearable warre, but the bulgars not onely do not eschew, but rather embrace them, as supposyng they can not lyue without them. Than againe, some other affections are entredeur and indifferent to both parts, which we may name *Naturall*, as the reuerence a man beareth towardes father and mother, the charynesse he hath ouer his children, the loue he oweth to his kinssfolkes and friends, with suche lyke. Which sayde Myddle affections are had also in some degree and pyce amonges

common

Saint Bernard dranke oyle in steede of wyne.

Diverse of affection

The praise of folly.

common people, though not so much as the
other. But holy men wyll struggle to race
them also out of theyr hartes; sayng as
farfoorth as they bee ghosly, and make
rather towardes the hyghest parte of man,
which is the Spirite, than any other fleshy
appetites: by whych conueyance they
maye loue theyr parentes not as theyr pa-
rentes, (for what else begatte they sauing
theyr bodyes? Yet euen that also 'ought to
bee referred to God the maker of al things)
but loue them rather as good folkes; in
whome the image of the spirite of God re-
splendisheth. Which sayde resemblance
they call beyn felicity, as the greatest good
that maye bee had; yea suche (they saye)
as onely, and none other, shoulde bee be-
loved, requyred, and wysshed after. And
so by thys sayde rule, doo they measure like-
wyle all the other partes and dueties of
thys lyfe: whereby it cometh to passe,
that what euer thyng is seene here present-
ly at the eye, if so bee they doo not fully
contemne the same, yet sure they set much
lesse thereby, than by other thynges, which
may not outwardly bee seene. Yea they
saye also, that euen in the Church sacra-
mentes,

The praue or iourney :

mentes, and woorkes of charitie, there may
bee tryed out both a Ghostlinesse and a bodi-
linesse : As for example , In fasting they
holde it not sufficient for a man to absteine
from eating of fleshe , which vulgar folke
suppose to bee the entyre and perfecte faste,
vnlesse that hee rebate somewhat also from
hys affections ; in geuyng lesse raynes
than before to hys anger , or in cutting hys
pydes combe shorter , or in lyghtning hym-
selfe of hys bodyly peyze, to the ende hys
spirite maye the nimblyer clymbe vp to the
grape and fruition of heauenly thinges. Like-
wyse in howsell, and receyuing of the Sacra-
ment , albeit (saye they) the Ceremonies and
circumstaunces vsed about the same , ought
not to bee neglected, yet must wee take them
of the self alone to be litle awaylable, or rather
hurtfull , vnlesse the other part , which is spi-
rituall , bee added also thereunto : that is to
saye , the thyng it selfe , which by those out-
warde signes is represented, For represented
is the death of Christ thereby , which death
all Christen men are bounde to followe and
expresse, both in dauntynge , fordooyng , and
buryng of all bodylye affections , to the ende
they may rise agayne, being restored to a new
lyfe,

The prayse of folly

life, as vnted thereby vnto Christ, and made
all one amonges themselves.

These mysteries are by godly and spiri-
tuall meaners scanned in this sort: but leude
folke commonly doo take the Masse sacrifice
to bee of none other effect, than as it were a
certayne Church service, wherein they ful-
ly dōd their dueties, as long as they be pre-
sent at it, standpug as neere the altar as they
maye, to heare the wordes of the priest, or
chaunting of the quyre, with other lyke Ce-
remonies and obseruaunces vsed about the
same.

Nowe, not onely in these two poynts,
which for examples sake I haue set tofore
you, but generally throughout all their ly-
uynge, holy men wyll flie from those things,
that sauer of the bodye, as beyng rapt and
drawne by to the other, that are Ghostly and
imissible. Insomuche therefore as there is
suche diuersitie and discencion in all poyn-
tes betweene these trades of men, it com-
meth to passe, that eache of them doo
take ocher for madde and distraught, not-
withstandpug (in my conceyte) that
name maye rightlier bee applyed vnto holpe
men than vulgar people: whych yee shall
plainly

Spake how
Follie dallieth
in his wordes
which are
to be considered

The prayse of folly.

plainly perceiue, why as soone as I haue to a good sense
 briefly (according to my promise) declared or else to be
 vnto you, how the finall mede and gwerdone, but as a talke
 that Christen men dooe loke after, is naught
 els than a certayne sweete rasing, and sim-
 ple alienation of the minde: wherin esteemes
 I require you, not to be ouer scrupulous gra-
 ters at the bare wordes without takyng the
 sense withall.

First therefore ye must thynke, that Pla-
 to dydde euen than dreame of such a thynge,
 when he wrote, that the passion and extreme
 rage of feruent louers was to be desired and
 embraced, as a thing aboue all others most
 blissfull: because that a vehement louer liueth
 not now in hymselfe, but rather in that
 he loueth. So that the further and further a
 louers hert is distraught from him selfe, to
 dwell with the beloued, the more and more
 he reioyceth. And when the minde seketh to
 wander from the body, nor occupieth the po-
 wers of the same in the due vse, who wyll
 call this otherwise then playne madnesse?
 For els why doe you vse commonly this
 phrase of speech: he is out of him selfe, and re-
 turne man to thy selfe, and he is come agayne
 to him selfe.

It

The prailc of foule.

It followeth therefore, howe much more perfecte, and the deepelyer such loue is im- pressed, that so muche the greater, and the bliffuller is the rage also,

Which so beyng that soules yet pynned within these bodily foldes may smacke a lit- tle of suche a felicitie, consider yee than what a lyfe the Sainctes soules leade in heauen: whereunto the myndes of godly persons doo wpth suche fertuencie aspyre: Sleepng there the spirit as vanquisher, and farre more puissaunt, shall wholly draw vp, and conuert the bodye into hir owne nature: Which she may doo the easlier, sleepng even in this lyfe here, shee had clenfed and puri- fied the same through fastynges and other deuoute meditations, to bee the meeter and more apte to receyue suche a Ghostly trans- formation.

And then agayne, the spirite selfe shalbe maruaylously rauished and soked vp by the farre more strong and attractiue power of the hyghest spirite of all, which is God. So that nowe those holy men shall be altogether transformed and alterated, by none other meanes yet to so high a degree in felicitie sayng onely because they as wholly beyng

issued

Transforma-
tion of the
body into the
spirit.

The praise of follic.

issued out of themselves, shall intoy and bee participant of that unspeakeable heauenlye sweetnesse, proceedinge from a pure and right perfect pleasure, through the might of God, the greatest good of all, that rauisheth and attyreteth all thinges to it selfe.

Now albeit this sayde felicitie is than most amply & absolutely enioyed, when the soules at the resurrection day being restored to their owne bodies, shall ioyntly receaue immortallitie: yet in as much as the life of good Christians is naught els than a continuall meditation of certayne shadow as it were of the lyfe to come, it chanceth, that they yet liuing, haue for their comforte permission at sometimes to discern a taste or sauour of that highest rewarde behight vnto them: Which sayde smacke or sent, be it but a litle drop in respect of that large flowing well of eternall felicity, yet surely it surpasseth, and incomparably exceedeth al other bodyly pleasures, yea although all the delices of all men were wholly ioyned and put in one. So much (loe) are spirituell thinges to bee preferred before fleshy thinges, and the inuisible before the oother visibill. For this vndoubtedly is euen the very gwerd one that the Prophet promy-

The lyfe of
good christians
a meditation
of the lyfe to
come.

The praise of Follie.

Let, Saying', was neuer mannes eye sawe,
nor eare heard, nor thought of harte yet com-
passed, what, and howe great felicitie God
hath prepared vnto such as doo loue hym? And
this is Mary Magdalens portion, which by
chaunge of lyfe shall not be plucked awaye,
but rather bee moze perfectly confirmed.

Whosoever therfore haue such grace (which
sure is giuen to fewe) by theyr life tyme to
cast of this sayde felicitie, they are subiect to
a certayne passion muche lyke vnto madnesse
or wittrauing, when rauished so in the spirit,
or beyng in a traunce, they doo speake cer-
taine things not hangyng one with another;
not after any earthly fashon, but rather doo
put forth a voyce they wote neuer what,
much lesse to bee vnderstoode of others: and
sodeinly without any apparent cause why,
doo chaunge the state of theyr countenances.
For nowe shall ye see them of glad cheere,
nowe of as sadde againe, nowe they weepe,
nowe they laugh, now they sighe, for briebe,
it is certaine that they are wholly distraught
and rapte out of themselves. In sort that
when a litle after they come againe to their
former wittes, they denye plainly they
wote where they became, or whether they
were

Godly men;
in a kynde
of traunce.

The praise of folly.

were than in theyr bodyes, or out of theyr bodyes, waking or sleeping: remembryng also as little, eyther what they heard, sawe, sayd, or dyd than, sauing as it were through a cloude, or by a dreame: but this they knowe certainly, that whyles their mindes so roued and wandred, they were most happye and blissfull, so that they lament and weepe at their retorne vnto their former senses, as who sayth, nothing were lesfer vnto them than continually to raue and bee de- teyned with such a spyce of madnesse. And this is but a certayne smacke or thinne taste of their blisse to come. But once more forgetting my selfe, *I passe my boundes.*

Howbeit if ought shall seeme vnto you too haue bene sayde of me more knappishly than became mee, or with moe woordes than needed, think I praye you, that I was the speaker, being both Folly, and a woman. Yet for all that remember the Greeke prouerbe, that oftentimes a Foole maye speake to purpose, vnlesse perchance ye thinke that this maketh no whit for women. I perceiue yee looke for an Epiloge or knot of my tale, but than sure yee are very fooles, if yee weene that yet I remember what I haue spoken, after such a
tablement

16
The praise of Follie.

raiment of words powdered forth. The olde
mouth sayeth, I hate a tale bearer from the
boord. But I say, I hate him that remembreth
what hee hath sayde. Fare yee well there:
fore, clap your handes in token of glad-
nesse, liue carelesse and dlynke all
out, ye the trusty seruants and
solemne ministers
of Follye.

FINIS.

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